

More Dangerous Thoughts

Introduction by
THEODORE DREISER

By MIKE QUIN

300

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MORE DANGEROUS THOUGHTS

By MIKE QUIN

Introduction by
THEODORE DREISER

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MIKE QUIN

By the Same Author

The Yanks Are Not Coming
Ashcan the M-Plan
Dangerous Thoughts
The Enemy Within

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Introduction

Any preface or literary foreword to Mike Quin's "More Dangerous Thoughts," or any other book that he chooses to write from now on—unless he changes greatly—can only, from the humanitarian point of view, be, by me, an endorsement of his ideas in toto—a eulogy of himself.

For here is a man, and in addition a humanitarian artist, who sees life not from the class but the mass point of view. Affectionately and wisely, he sees the truth as to life's social processes—the rich dominating and, more often than not, ill-treating the poor; the strong, the weak, etc., etc.

More, he sees, and with such understanding and intense sympathy, the sufferings of the many as opposed to the swilling and indifferent satisfactions of the few.

He understands the common laborer, the ditch digger, the hewer of wood and the drawer of water, and, like the man Christ is supposed to have been, he says, in current American words: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is a just claim to a better social state—a just and equitable one—and that that state is coming.

Day after day I read his column in The People's World, and there I find him walking by the side of the moneyless, the homeless—the ignorant and not always honest, but toiling laborer, and saying to them as Christ said: "Be of good cheer,

for you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the feet of men."

And don't think I am thinking of Christ as the son of God—although truly whoever thinks as he did should be, and is closely related to Universal Equity, if there is any such thing. Rather I am thinking of him as a common man, possibly like Mike Quin who sympathizes deeply with his fellow men and hates inequity.

For day after day he writes of and for the common man as against the grafters and fools and the greedy money swine of the world. And he says of the poor and ignorant and oppressed, over and over, see how little they have, how little it takes to make them happy, how patiently they work, and how they are fought and beaten and tortured because they seek to join together in unions to protect themselves.

And because of this I daily admire and respect him. And I truly and deeply wish that all, everywhere might see and read what he has to say.

Theodore Dreiser.

AFTER THE WAR IS OVER

AS ONE WHO SERVED in the last war, and was decorated with a medal of honor, I believe I should be listened to in the present emergency. My outfit was Troop 27 of the Boy Scouts of America, and my commander, The Reverend Hayes of Grace Cathedral.

My duties ranged all the way from running errands free of charge for government agencies, to hissing slackers and suspected slackers. The medal, which they assured me was made from the steel of a captured German cannon, had a blank space for the engraving of my name. But they didn't trouble themselves to engrave it. They just handed it to me and said I could have it engraved myself—which I never managed to get the money to do. It was always a source of chagrin to me and I once tried to scratch my name on it with a nail, but the metal was too hard. There wasn't even a ribbon on it—just a hole where one might go. I borrowed a red one from my mother, sewed it to an old clasp pin, and it looked all right from a distance.

We paraded almost every day and regretted bitterly that we were too little to share in the glory and adventure of no-man's-land. We talked it over frequently. Older people said this was a war to end all wars—that when this one was over there would never be another because people would not stand for it. This made us sick at heart. Here we were just too late for the last war on earth—nothing to look forward to but dullness—no chance to be heroes like the men in the movies.

I kept a scrap book of war pictures clipped out of newspapers and magazines and pasted into an old ledger from one of my father's many ill-fated business ventures.

In spare time we would catch star-fish along the shore, dry them and sell them to the soldiers in the Presidio. They were



mostly from mid-western states and had never seen the ocean before—had never been anywhere before. Their conversation was much concerned with their opportunity to see Paris, and many of them were restless—afraid the war would be over before they got a chance to see Paris.

Men came around to our school and organized us into special "yellow dog" clubs. The literature was all printed on yellow paper and I remember an illustration of a mean-faced man in a civilian suit fleeing from a crowd of handsome looking little boys who were booing and hissing him. Slackers and un-patriotic persons were to be our prey.

I remember a very handsome and heroic looking young soldier who came to our classroom. Old Mrs. Robertson suspended the studies and introduced him as "one of our boys who had been over there." He told us that the American troops were always humane and gallant—that they always gave the other fellow a chance. But that there was one time they did not. They recaptured a convent, and when they saw what those beastly Germans had done to the nuns, something came over them. They lost their tempers and chased those Germans around the courtyard and bayoneted every one of them.

We clapped and cheered and yelled, and old Mrs. Robertson cried a little.

Then I remember when the armistice was signed and the boys came home. I slept little on the night before the first contingent arrived back. What glory would be theirs, I thought—what pride, what honor.

Next morning I pinned on my medal and ran down Fillmore street to see the heroes. The experience was so disturbing it has never left my mind. They were gathered around cigar stands and on corners, still in uniform. The smell of whiskey was strong among them. One man flipped his coat bitterly. "The

first thing I want to do is get out of this goddam thing," he said. "Of all the ,.:&,\$%o.,1/4ing wars!"

From group to group all up and down the street I wandered in bewilderment. Everywhere it was the same. "I'll have better sense next time." "They'll never get me again." "If there's ever another, just tell them to shove it." "You guys who stayed home had sense."

One of the heroes was a friend of our family and we strained our budget to provide a welcoming feast that night. He arrived drunken, disillusioned, disagreeable. Already he'd got rid of his uniform and insisted on referring to himself as a "goddam fool."

I didn't know what to make of it. I didn't know what to think. It took the pride out of my medal. Somehow the gold star flags in the windows of homes on our street lost their glory. The tremendous propaganda machine to which our minds had been dancing was turned off bluntly—like when the orchestra stops.

We'd just been killing, that's all—killing. And the reason wasn't clear.

JACK SPRATT

Jack Spratt can eat no fat,
His wife can eat no beef.
'Tis not that both don't like the taste,
But they are on relief.
'Tis not that cows and pigs are scarce,
They moo and grunt like thunder;
But pigs are learning birth control
And cows have been plowed under.

MICKEY, THE BELFAST TERROR

A SAILOR'S HOME is his ship and the rolling ocean is his vast front lawn. It's not what you'd call a very comfortable home, but none the less a congenial family spirit prevails in glory hole and fo'csle where each man has a narrow steel locker in which to keep his few belongings. Between the rows of bunks piled one on top of the other, there is a small strip of deck space—enough for one or two men to stand at a time.

When you're lying in your own bunk with the steam pipes sweating and hissing over your head and your neighbor snoring just under you, and the rich, unventilated air weighting the atmosphere around you, it has a cozy, home-like feeling. A battered alarm clock dangles from a string tied to a pipe. Pictures of dames are tacked up to the nearby bulkhead. You can feel the throb of the big engines in the springs of your bunk. If your quarters are aft, the crazy rattling and rumbling of the steering engine haunts your dreams and becomes as accustomed to your ears as the chirping of crickets to a suburban resident.

The mess table itself is a combined family gathering place and open forum where every mouthful of beans or stew is richly seasoned with political arguments. While the food may not be up to mother's standard the conversation has all the hilarity of a family affair.

The ship is really a rolling home, not so much for all these reasons as for one final touch that completes the picture. That final touch is the ship's cat.

It's usually a scrawny one of mixed colors and ungainly shape; a four legged member of the crew who came aboard without bothering to sign articles. You can reach down, tickle its chin, rouse it to warm purring, and you know your ship is a home. For this was a vagrant, friendless creature who wandered aboard in search of a home and found one. Though

roundly cursed on frequent occasions and made the target of myriad thrown articles, the cat knows it's a home and it has the warm legs of human friends against which to rub its furry body.

Even if you change the name on the bow or fly a new flag from the stern, it's all the same to the cat.

It was all the same to Blackie, the cat of the "American Trader," when its owners sold the ship to foreign interests for a fat profit. They painted out "American Trader" and replaced it with "Ville de Hasselt," and a different colored flag was hoisted on the stern pole. That was all right with Blackie.

For a long time the word "war—war—war" had sounded in the arguments of Blackie's human shipmates. But her only language was the mewing of hunger or the purring of contentment. She didn't know that strange steel ships that traveled undersea were spewing iron fish at the rolling homes of seamen, tearing their hulls like paper and sending them bubbling and roaring to the bottom of the sea.

She didn't know that the friendly arguing voices in the fo'c'sle might one day scream in terror—that the warm legs against which she rubbed herself might one day struggle hopelessly in icy water. She didn't know about war.

In port the gangplank went over the side and Blackie's human shipmates rumbled down it laughing and jostling. And Blackie, of course took shore leave too—took it as freely and carelessly as the men she lived with. Always she was back on sailing day, mewing around the galley, looking as battered and pleasure-worn as the rest.

On the ship's last voyage as the "American Trader"—before they painted a new name and flew a new flag—Blackie became uncommonly stout. Presently her condition was the joyous scandal of the entire vessel and she found herself the object of exceptional kindness and excessive attention. Her pan was

heaped with unusual tid-bits and a note of gentle respect was evident in the voices of her human shipmates.

It was a merry day when five sprightly kittens frolicked on the good ship's decks, chased wads of paper tied to strings and battled fiercely with the fondling fingers of seamen.

Gradually they acquired names and personalities and the liveliest of them all was Mickey, the Belfast Terror.

When the ship returned to the docks of New York, Blackie was the proudest mother of the seven seas, licking and pawing her brood and teaching them the ways of a cat with a crew. It was then that the name was painted over and the new flag strung up. Grim long boxes of rifles were loaded aboard. Crates of airplanes were made fast to her decks.

Then the thing happened. A long shiny automobile that looked something like an ambulance drew up in front of the dock and well-dressed people came aboard.

"We are from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," they said. "And we have come for your cats."

Ike, the steward, calmly told them to go to blazes. "This is their home," he said. "And they're kindly treated."

"That's not the point," said the well-dressed gentle people. "You are sailing into the war zone and the lives of those cats are in danger."

That stumped Ike. By this time a good number of the crew had gathered round. The first officer came down from the bridge. Yes, these people had the company's permission. Their papers were clear. Their authority beyond doubt. The cats must go.

It was a terrified, clawing Blackie whom they carried down the gang plank and locked into the shiny automobile with four of her babies. No submarines—no torpedoes or mines must endanger cats. But why do I say only four of Blackie's babies were

taken? The fifth one was Mickey, the Belfast Terror whom the steward concealed in a cracker can.

So Mickey sailed for the open sea on a ship that still was home. For there is no society for the prevention of sinking ships or drowning men. And if the crew goes down to the awful depths, Mickey will go with them, and there will be a cat in Davy Jones' locker—to make it a bit like home.

And that happens, ladies and gentlemen, to be a true story of this cockeyed world of ours.

* * * *

Only a few days after this story was published in the PEOPLE'S WORLD, the "Ville de Hasselt" was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic. Most of her boys went with her, down to the lightless depths. And Mickey went with them.

For the cheated, lonely men of the sea, there is a cat in Davey Jones' locker, to make it a bit like home.

LA BELLE FRANCE

The lady of love and laughter
Walks dangling her key as she goes
And inviting the eyes of the passer
With tight-fitting open-work hose.

More famous than all the cathedrals,
More talked of than Rheims or Louvain,
La Belle is the widow of conflict—
By-product of centuries of pain.

Her eyes are the smoldering ashes
Of homes where disaster has spread.
She laughs like the ring of new silver.
Her lips are the blood of the dead.

The toast of man's decadent pleasures;
The boast of the tourists who tell
Of hungry but beautiful ladies,
And passion as burning as hell.

A dollar, a franc or a shilling,
Or any old coin that will clink.
An hour of love, then you leave her
To wash off her kisses with drink.

Come citizens, tourists, invaders;
Her kiss and embrace are renowned.
For she tries to pretend you're the husband
They killed and laid under the ground.

Come heed to the lure of cheap loving,
And follow the sway of her hips.
She will try to pretend you're the lover
Whose blood was as red as her lips.

I've heard all the learned excuses.
Their lewd explanations are neat.
But hunger and death are the reasons
She rattles her keys on the street.

When hatred and tears have grown sour,
And life becomes dirty and cold,
And the death of your man has been measured
In so many pieces of gold;

When all that you love has been buried,
And bankers lay claim to the rest;
When factories shut down and you're hungry,
They'll still pay a price for your breast.

God damn all the men who make money
From wars and their pompous conceit,
Then starve the poor loverless women
To selling themselves on the street.

Not this time, La Belle, let us teach them
The steps to a new kind of dance
That will stamp out their madness forever,
And free the great spirit of France.

Not prostitutes pounding the pavement,
Nor factory girls grieving in slums,
Nor futures of misery and sorrow
All drilled to the beat of the drums.

This time make it fists and hot anger
And doom to the merchants of death,
That France may belong to its workers
And workers may sing with their breath.

THE BIG PARADE

Get out your flags and banners,
Let's hear you cheer once more.
Here come the men we slaughtered
In the last imperialist war.

An endless, bony cavalcade
Of husband, son and brother,
Come back to ask the reason why
They massacred each other.

Why do you stand there silent?
Why do the women cry?
Do they recognize their husbands
In the skeletons marching by?

How much is learned from experience
When the lesson costs you your head!
If only the lips of the living could speak
With half the sense of the dead!

*If only the dead could rise in wrath
And speak to the world of men,
They would cry from the depths of their cheated hearts:
"The Yanks are not coming again!"*

LANDLADIES

LANDLADIES ARE AN IMPORTANT American institution. They preside over a vast empire of furnished rooms embracing millions of lives. Theirs is a domain of faded wallpaper, patched carpets, battered dressers and chipped enamel bedsteads.

"It's a lovely room," she will say, as she labors up the stairs ahead of you. "The last young man just hated to give it up."

The hall smells a little moldy and the boards creak under your feet.

"The sun pours in here all morning," she says, flinging open the door. "Are you employed?"

The chipped enamel bed. The veneer-board dresser with a wavy mirror. The threadbare carpet. A makeshift closet with drapes of flowery cotton cloth. A rickety little table. A gas plate on a home-made stand. A few misfit plates, cups and saucers.

"Yes, I work downtown."

"We're right handy to the streetcars. Just a block away. You're steady, I hope."

"Oh, yes. I hope so."

"That's the closet. This is the heater—though you hardly ever need it, the way the sun pours in in the mornings. The toilet's just down the hall. We have a lovely big bath. I allow one bath a week. If you want more I have to charge a little extra. What business did you say you were in?"

"I work for a hardware company—Baxter and Kelly."

"Reason I ask is I always like to have steady people."

"How much is it?"

"Everything is clean. I change the sheets every week and we're just one block from the carline. Do you cook?"

"Well, maybe a cup of coffee once in a while."

"Everything is very handy. I've just had the gas plate fixed and a new tube put on it."

"How much is it?"

"I was going to say, if you're going to be steady, I could let you have it for three dollars and a half a week."

"Ommmmm! Well, it looks all right. I'll let you know."

"There was a man here this morning who said he was coming back. I'd like to hold it for you, if you really feel—"

"Well, there are a couple of other places I wanted to look at. Of course, they're probably not as good as this. But I'll let you know."

"I don't know where you could find any place as handy to the carline. The sun pours in here all morning."

"Thanks a lot. It's very nice and I'll let you know."

"I was going to say, I could come down a little—if you are going to be steady. I could make it three dollars a week." Her poor, tired face is difficult to look at. You saw the kids' toys littered in the hall below, smelled the cabbage on the stove in the kitchen, and got a fleeting glimpse of crowded poverty in a tired, old house through a partly open door.

"Well, thanks very much. I'll let you know."

Creakety creak, down the stairs you go.

After five or six houses, your brain is a blur of soiled wallpaper and the soapy, steamy odors of dark hallways. Trying to find a little hole where you can hang up your clothes and sit down at night, with maybe a comfortable chair and a light to read by. You walk down avenues of old, tired houses, spotting the white signs in the windows.

No wonder the bars are crowded with guys just sitting there jawing. Who wants to go and sit by himself in a furnished room?

Finally you find a place, though, rig yourself a light over the bed, tack a couple of pictures on the wall, litter your stuff around, and it's a kind of home. The landlady becomes a fixture in your life, bawls you out, gives you advice, provides free

philosophic guidance from the depths of her abundant experience, and tells you about the other roomers. As you lie in bed at night, you hear your neighbors running the water for a bath, bawling each other out, stumbling up the stairs, flushing the toilets, and banging the furniture around. Later on there's a series of thump-thumps as the shoes hit the floor two by two. Then the old house is filled with the creaking of springs. A distant snore reaches you softly through the faded wallpaper. Outside the "right handy" streetcar clatters by in the night.

What the hell do you expect for three bucks a week?

THE MAN IN THE MOON

The Man in the Moon came down to earth,
And over the roads he sprinted;
'Till he was pinched for vagrancy
And mugged and fingerprinted.

THE REMARKABLE BOMB

THE TWO LABORERS set the heavy box down at the feet of the distinguished gentlemen, then withdrew to a respectful distance. Mr. J. Vulgar Dirtybrain patted it with an affectionate hand. "It's a magnificent bomb," he said.

General Horseblodget toyed with his mustache and eyed the box skeptically. "Haw," he said. "We shall soon see."

Gathered about them, tethered to little stakes in the ground were numerous pigs. There were exactly one hundred pigs, not counting the distinguished gentlemen, military officers and government officials who were present for the test. The pigs were staked over a wide area approximating a radius of 500 yards.

"I understand you are the inventor of this remarkable bomb," said Colonel Gore.

"I am, Colonel," said Dirtybrain with unconcealed pride. "And I am sure when I have given you a demonstration you will agree it is the most splendid explosive charge ever conceived."

"Haw," said General Horseblodget.

"Humph! Humph!" grunted the Colonel.

The two laborers watched curiously from a distance.

"What the devil are they going to do?" asked one.

"They're going to blow up the pigs," said the other.

"And what for?" asked the first laborer.

"Well," said the other, "it's for a war they're planning. Do you see all those pigs? Well, they have a new kind of bomb in that box and they say one blast of it will kill every pig."

"Whew!" the first laborer whistled through his teeth. "And what if it does?"

"Then they'll buy the bomb patent and use it to kill people."

The first laborer hesitated for a moment, then turned on his heel and started to foot it away from the scene. The other fol-

lowed and they didn't stop until they were a half mile from the spot. Here they paused on a slight rise of ground to watch the proceedings.

Back among the pigs, J. Vulgar Dirtybrain began unwinding a coil of wire. "We will withdraw to the top of that hill," he said, "and I will explode the bomb by electric current."

"Haw," said General Horseblodget.

The entire Government was there including the Grand Foogle and all his fimps, finks, funks and privy counselors. They all withdrew to the hilltop to witness the explosion of a bomb which might mean the introduction of civilization as they were accustomed to it, to the rest of mankind.

The pigs grunted and rooted amicably, unsuspecting that they would be the first to taste the noisy fruit of Dirtybrain's imagination. "It is really an excellent bomb," he said as he unwound the coil of wire.

"If it kills all the pigs, we will buy it," said General Horseblodget.

"And if it doesn't, we won't buy it," added Colonel Gore.

"Haw," said General Horseblodget.

At length they reached the top of the hill where the other dignitaries were already assembled. The Grand Foogle approached, gracefully extending one hand. "May I?" he asked, with an engaging smile.

"By all means," said Dirtybrain. "I am honored." He handed the switch to the Grand Foogle, with the wire dangling from it.

The High Chamberlain was passing among the assembled gentlemen with a box of antiseptic cotton offering them wads to plug in their ears. Many turned their backs and clapped their hands to their ears for double protection.

"I'm new to this sort of thing," said the Grand Foogle.

"You just press down the little connecting lever," said Dirtybrain, "and then——"

"Haw," said General Horseblodget.

The Grand Foogle made a face like castor oil, held the switch at arm's length, and closed his eyes. "Ready or not," he screeched, and pressed down the lever.

The two laborers half-mile distant were thrown from their feet by the explosion. For a moment the sky was almost obliterated by flying pigs, chancellors, fimps, finks, funks, privy counselors, generals, colonels, and the Grand Foogle himself. So great was the noise and the impact of the silence that followed that the two laborers clung to the earth with eyes shut and gripped the grass to keep from being blown along by the rush of air that swept down the valley.

At last they opened their eyes to a silent landscape and stood erect. The hillside was bare and scorched, the valley void of pigs. Not a distinguished gentleman, not a military officer, not a foogle, fink, or funk was to be seen on all that broad stretch of land.

"He was right," said one of the laborers. "It was a truly remarkable bomb."

"The best that was ever invented," said the other.

HONEST ABE

Maybe we make too many gods
Of sensible courageous guys,
And set them high above the mass
Of ordinary human eyes.
Maybe a lot of guys called great
Were finks at heart and fools of fate.

Maybe the men of sacred name
Up in the lofty sphere of fame
Are set too high on golden shelves
For guys to identify with themselves.

They were so noble and so good (?),
So damnably virtuous and wise (?),
They seem a separate, better breed
Than ordinary humble guys.
And a man may lose respect for himself
When he looks at the heroes high on the shelf.

Restless humanity looking for heroes,
Christs, Napoleons and Neroes—
Somebody kinder, wiser, fatter,
To serve them Utopia on a platter.

But there was a guy by the name of Abe
Who wandered into the hall of fame,
Who wasn't the high-blown hero type,
But sat him down there just the same.
A gawky, raw-boned guy who sat
Like a clumsy farmer in a stovepipe hat.

And he sits there still, and he sits there high,
Like a cast of the ordinary guy,
On one of fame's most sturdy shelves—
For he gave men confidence in themselves.

He started out in Illinois,
Splitting rails to make a fence,
And he lived to best the fanciest brains
With ordinary common sense.
Though Abe may lie among the dead,
They're still afraid of the things he said.

His tongue was an axe for splitting rails,
And his brain was a hammer for pounding nails,
And his words threw fear in the men on high,
For Lincoln talked like a working guy.

They quote the milder words of Abe
And leave the stronger things alone,
For Abe saw fit to name the day
When workingmen would claim their own.

You can have the heroes in frills and panties.
We who were born in flats and shanties
Can point to Abe and lay our claim
To labor's place in the Hall of Fame.

Let bankers close on the day of his birth
And parasites claim him for all they're worth.
Abe Lincoln's name is going down
With Marx and Debs and Old John Brown.

'Twas Lincoln's creed that arms and brains
Should rid themselves of whips and chains,
And black and white live friend and brother,
Equal and confident in each other.

It's not yet that, and the task begun
Needs many a blow before it's done;
But the chains were broken and the way was cleared—
And that's exactly what the stiff shirts feared.

It's a shame that the man who started the job
Should be slain by a crazy little snob;
But it's good to know that on fame's high shelves,
At least one man was like ourselves.

*A man too common to ever die,
A man too plain to glorify,
A man with the greatness
Of the working guy.*

THE MUGITY WUMPUS

Arriving back in America after an absence of 15 years or more, Dr. Emory Hornsnagle was surprised by a strange creature approaching him along the road. At first he took it to be a weird animal or land bird of the emu or cassowary variety. It waddled clumsily on four legs and had a large, plum-like tail protruding from the rear.

As it drew nearer, he perceived it to be a man crawling on his hands and knees. His hair had been shaved off and his head was painted blue. His body was encircled by red stripes. What looked like a tail was a long stick decorated with streamers of colored paper and bearing a placard: *I Love Capitalism*.

As the man crawled, he muttered over and over: "I am not a Communist. I am not a Communist. I am not a Communist."

"Then what are you?" asked Dr. Hornsnagle.

The creature took one look at Hornsnagle, then turned around and began to crawl away as rapidly as its hands and knees could carry it.

Hornsnagle quickly lassoed it by one leg and tied it to a tree. "Now there is no reason for you to be frightened," he said. "I am not going to hurt you. As a scientist I would like to know what you are."

"Let me go," begged the creature. "If I am seen talking to you I will get in trouble."

"Why should you get in trouble for talking to me?" asked Hornsnagle.

"Because you are a Communist," whined the creature.

"Nonsense," said Hornsnagle. "What makes you think that?"

"Because," said the creature, "there is nothing about you to indicate you are not. If you were not a Communist you

would certainly do something to indicate you were not. As for myself, you can see at a glance I am no Communist."

"Just what is a Communist?" asked Hornsnagle.

"I don't know," replied the creature, "but you certainly could not accuse me of being one."

"But crawling on your hands and knees," said Hornsnagle, "and that, er—tail—isn't it all somewhat inconvenient?"

The creature broke into tears, and Dr. Hornsnagle kindly loaned it his handkerchief.

"I used to walk erect," it said, "and speak my mind freely. It all started when they brought that resolution into the union."

"What resolution?" asked Hornsnagle.

"The resolution against communism," said the creature. "They told us the employers would not deal with us because they suspected us of being Communistic. So we passed the resolution to convince them."

"And then what?" asked Hornsnagle.

"They were still not convinced," said the creature. "It was discovered that many of our members had Communistic books and literature in their homes."

"So what did you do?" asked Hornsnagle.

"We expelled them," said the creature, "and the rest of us burned our libraries to make absolutely sure."

"Did that convince them?" asked Hornsnagle.

"No. They said our officials were Communistic. So we expelled them too and elected new ones who were highly praised in the newspapers as reasonable and patriotic."

"What happened then?" asked Hornsnagle.

"Then we stopped holding meetings," said the creature. "There was nothing to meet about anyhow. It was impossible to make any demand or conduct any business without being



called Communistic. Later on we disbanded the union altogether."

"Didn't that convince them?" asked Hornsnagle.

The creature shook its head sadly. "No indeed. Employers made a rule to employ only the most non-Communistic workers who would work for the lowest wages. Everybody began to outdo each other in being non-Communistic. Some of them began to crawl, and pretty soon no one could get a job at all if he didn't crawl. Then one thing followed another. The tail piece was thought up by William Green."

"Why don't you stand up and tell them to go to hell?" asked Dr. Hornsnagle.

"That would be impossible," said the creature.

"And why so?" asked Hornsnagle.

"Because," said the creature, "that would be Communistic."

WAITING

HE COULD SEE she was a nice lady, very friendly and sympathetic. She scribbled something on a piece of paper and gave it to him.

"You've come to the wrong place," she said: "You go to that address for your district."

"This isn't the right place?" he asked.

"Not for your district," she said.

"They told me—" he began.

"They made a mistake," she said. "I'm sorry. You'd better go right over to the other place."

"I live at—"

"I know," she said. "If you'll go to the place I've written on the paper, that's the right place for your district. This is out of your district."

There were other people in line. Staring at the piece of paper, he moved slowly away and made room for the next. It wasn't that he was dense, but he had walked so far, and sometimes if you will only explain a little more, they discover you are at the right place after all.

He read the address over and over, then moved as if to go back and ask once more. But others had crowded in, so he walked away.

"I should have asked someone else before I came," he thought. "This was where Joe told me. But Joe lives nearer here. I should have asked first to make sure."

It had been a long walk clear across town and now his brain was a little thick. "People will think I am a fool," he thought. "They will think I am stupid." He had to ask two or three times to hear a thing right, and he had to read a thing over and over before it registered. It wasn't that way before. That's the difference food makes. You get hungry and your feet hurt and then things are different and people think you are stupid.

At a little park he stopped at the free drinking fountain and filled up on water. It almost made him feel cheerful.

Every once in a while he would take the piece of paper out of his pocket and read it again to be sure he was making no mistake this time. It was all the way back and a little farther.

He had to pass his own door, but he went down a block and around. It wouldn't do to go in. Marie would only think he was stupid and the children would think he was bringing food.

He found the place. It was an old wooden building of some kind. Inside you didn't know where to go and there was nobody to tell you. At last he found a little window. There was another nice lady behind it. She smiled sympathetically and was very patient. "Come back at two o'clock," she said, and gave him another little slip of paper.

He could see a big clock like they used to have in school ticking on the wall. It was hard for him to figure it out. Finally he complained, "That is two hours and a half."

She explained that it couldn't be helped, because there simply wasn't anyone there to see him and wouldn't be until two.

"Not until two," he repeated.

"No," she said. "Not until two o'clock."

He could see that she thought he was stupid, but it was only that he was hungry and when a thing is so very important you have got to be sure you are not making a mistake.

He went out to the sidewalk and read the new slip of paper carefully. Then he compared it with the other that had only the address on it, was about to throw that one away, then changed his mind and put them both in his pocket. Why take chances when your head is a little dizzy and you're not positive you're doing things right?

He walked around a little, then went to the park and sat. There was a big clock over a store, so he sat there and watched it. You couldn't see the hands move at all, yet they were mov-

ing because finally it was ten minutes to one. She said two, but why take any chances? He went back to the place and sat in a wooden chair in the hallway.

Whenever any of the nice friendly people walked by with papers in their hands, he would look up hopefully. But it was no good. It wasn't two o'clock.

About a quarter after two someone called out his name and the blood shot to his head. He hurried forward and followed a calm striding woman into a little office. He told her his name and his wife's name and the names of the children and where they were born and where he had worked and how long and the names of his bosses and everything about himself and his family. "Now," she said, "can you come back on Thursday?"

"Lady," he said, "I don't like to say it, but I must. I came because I must. I must. I have no money—no food. I—lady, I don't know what to do until Thursday."

She did not hesitate a moment. "I didn't realize," she said. "I'll make a special case. I think I can get someone to see you today. Come with me."

They went to a big room with chairs all around the edges and people sitting in them looking nervous.

"Just sit here," she said, "and I'll have someone see you."

There he sat and watched the others sitting. Hour after hour went by. There were little doors and every once in a while a nice friendly looking man or woman would come out and call a name. Someone would get up and go in and stay a long while.

Hour after hour went by as the people sat and stared. He thought of farms and trains and food and parades. He thought of movies he had seen and things he had heard. He thought of stories and jokes and fights and people—and Marie and the children waiting at home. It was all mixed up and jumbled in his brain and every once in a while there would be blank spots before his eyes. And he sat there waiting and waiting and waiting for his name to be called.

THE PATRIOTIC THING

"PLEASE BUY ONE," he said. "I'm trying to make enough to get a place to sleep tonight."

His eyes were tired and watery and his hand shook as it held out the red, white and blue banner. "God bless America!" was the legend printed beneath a proud eagle. A dirty cap graced his old, grey head, and a score or more of celluloid buttons pinned to his ragged coat gave him somewhat the appearance of a British costermonger. On one lapel he had Willkie buttons and on the other Roosevelt buttons.

"You'll probably go right out and spend it for booze," said Grogan.

"Then buy a button," pleaded the old man. "The buttons are only a nickel."

"I don't know," said Grogan. He stuck his cigar in his teeth, reached out and felt the cloth of the banner. "It's mighty cheap stuff."

"It's the very best Japanese silk," said the old man.

"Haven't you got something a little more different?" asked Grogan.

"Most everybody likes this one best," said the old man. "It's the words of the song, 'God Bless America!'"

"I know," said Grogan. "But me, I like to be different."

"Here's a new one," said the old man. "Maybe you'll like it better." He fumbled through his assortment and held up one that had a border of twenty-five eagles and the words "MY GOD! I'M CRAZY ABOUT AMERICA!" in red, white and blue letters.

"That's more like it," said Grogan. "That's got class."

"It's all a matter of what you like," said the old man. "Some people prefer one and some people prefer the other. It's according to individual taste."

"I'll give you thirty-five cents for it," said Grogan.

"I couldn't do that," said the old man. "I have to pay forty cents for it. All I make on it is a dime."

"I bet it doesn't cost them more than a nickel apiece to turn them things out," said Grogan.

"I don't know what it costs them," said the old man. "But I have to pay forty cents."

"All right," said Grogan, "then I'll give you forty cents."

"Please," said the old man. "I've got to make something. I've walked all day. Look at that." He held up one foot. The shoe was dirty and soggy and worn through the sole. He had cut a piece out of one side to accommodate a bunion that bulged through repulsively.

"Put it down," said Grogan. "Christ almighty. That's a hell of a thing to be goin' around poking in front of people's faces."

"I don't know what they expect you to do," said the old man. "I've got to live. I've got to make my living somehow. You can't get a job. Nobody wants an old man. It's not right. It's not fair."

"What the hell do you think I can do about it?" asked Grogan. "I got a family of my own. I ain't no millionaire. I ain't responsible for all you guys. Christ almighty! There's a limit."

"I know," said the old man. "It's the system that's wrong."

"The system!" said Grogan. "Always the system. If you don't like the American system, why don't you get the hell out of here and go to some other country?"

"I don't mean that. I didn't mean to say—what I mean to say is—"

"Running down your country ain't going to get you anywheres."

"I wasn't running down. I'm as patriotic as anybody. I'm an old man, and I'm hungry, and I didn't mean—"

"Oh, hell. I'll give you the fifty cents," said Grogan. "But give me a clean one. That one's dirty."

The old man's hands trembled in anticipation as he examined the banner. "It's just a speck. It will rub right off."

"Naw, I want a fresh one."

"It's the only one I've got of that particular one. I can give you one of the others."

"Naw, hell, that other one's too cheesy. Here, let me see it." Grogan took the banner, examined the spot and felt the material. "Hell, I'm always bein' gypped by you guys. The damn thing will probably fall apart in a week. Here's your four bits."

"Thanks," said the old man. "You'll find it's good. It's the best you can buy. I wouldn't lie to you."

"I know, I know, I know. You got your four bits. I'm a sucker. God damn big hearted sap—that's what's the matter with me."

Somehow, when the old man had gone, and he'd tacked the banner over the cash register, Grogan felt better about it. It sort of set the whole place off—gave it class. The eagles and the bright colors warmed the eye. And the slogan seemed to express just the right sentiment: "MY GOD! I'M CRAZY ABOUT AMERICA!"

THE DIAPER BRIGADE

Here come they, wailing, screaming into life,
Glub-glubbing in their bassinets and cribs,
With tiny ribboned bonnets on their heads
And animals embroidered on their bibs.

Here come they, like a legion to the fray,
Their didies are white banners in the breeze,
And all we plan laboriously today
Is destined to be rearranged by these.

The fears and bitter worries that enshroud
Our brains and twist our faces all awry,
Will scatter like the clouds before the wind
Of their triumphant laughter when we die.

And all our thumping, pounding, nailing down
The future like a carpet to the floor,
Will be ripped up and their young feet shall tread
Where human beings never dared before.

How diligently life will strive to train
These new ones to our narrow, fearful ways,
And bend each tiny energetic brain
To fit this social, economic maze.

Tradition's mold will try to force their lives
To painful, twisted patterns of ourselves,
And learned men will beat them on the heads,
With dull and musty volumes from the shelves.

But this wave is not destined to accept
The mess of cruel customs we have massed,
And these shall rise like rebels into life
To sweep aside the errors of the past.

All hail the screaming diaper brigade!
Here come new men and women to the earth.
Their hands will claim the new and better life
To which our groping, struggling must give birth.

Their energies will run full, strong and free,
Their brains will not be muddled by despair,
And they will tear down fences and rebuild
The world upon a pattern bright and fair.

Not scornfully, we hope, but they will laugh
At our crude, gloomy groping after truth
Which they will grasp quite readily for their own,
And flourish in the confidence of youth.

These things we reasoned painfully and slow,
To them will be apparent at a glance.
The roads we pioneer with sweat and toil
Are paths down which their joyous feet will dance.

THE MAN THEY COULDN'T DRAFT

THE OLD SAILOR removed the pipe from his mouth and expectorated contemptuously. "War," he said, "is neither complicated nor difficult to understand. You just take a gun and kill people. But my grandfather was too smart for them. He had a most methodical mind, he did."

The children sat quietly while he puffed thoughtfully and gazed out to sea. They knew he would continue presently.

"'Twas during the war for the purification of virtue," he said. "That was long ago, before you were born. My grandfather, a handsome young man at the time, was drafted with all the rest. The doctor looked down his throat and thumped his chest and declared him the finest specimen of them all.

"They gave him a bath and dressed him in a uniform and then handed him a gun. 'And now you are ready,' they said.

"'Ready for what?' says my grandfather.

"'Why, ready to go and shoot,' they said.

"'And who am I going to shoot?' my grandfather wanted to know.

"'Why, the enemy, of course,' they said.

"'And who might that be?' asked my grandfather.

"That stumped them. 'If it be necessary to shoot a man,'" said my grandfather, 'then I suppose I shall shoot him. But who is he? What is his name? Is he married or single? Does he have any children? What is his profession? How old is he? I have no objections at all to shooting him, but you can't ask me to put holes in a man who is a complete stranger.'

"That was most logical and the generals could not deny it. Nothing would do but they must go to the files of the names of the enemy troops and select someone for my grandfather to shoot. 'Here,' they said. 'This man will do as well as any other. Here is his complete record and you will find a photograph

attached. Take it home and read it carefully. When you know him well enough, come back and we will send you to the front to shoot him.'

"The very next day my grandfather came back. 'This will not do,' he said. 'I cannot kill him. A finer man I never heard tell of. Indeed I have grown as fond of him as a brother. His name is Oliver Schmaltz and he runs a bicycle repair shop. He has a wife and three small children. In his spare time he plays the violin and sings: 'Sweetheart the Buds Are Blooming.' 'Tis my favorite song and goes like this:

*'Sweetheart, the buds are blooming;
'Banish that tear from your eye.
'Smile for me, darling, and kiss me,
'Before I march off to die.
'Smile for me, darling, and kiss me—
'For I must march off to die.'*

" 'That will be enough,' said the general. You could see that he was very much impressed. 'I know how you feel,' he said, 'and I don't blame you. We shall give him to someone else to kill.'

"Then the general went to the files again and spent a long while studying over the enemy soldiers. Finally he located one who seemed suitable. 'Here,' he said to my grandfather. 'Here is one any man would be happy to shoot. Go home and study his record. When you are sufficiently acquainted with him, come back and you may shoot him without delay.'

"My grandfather took home the record and studied it long and earnestly. This man was indeed a contemptible character. His name was Oscar Finkle. He spent the days boozing in saloons and the evenings beating his wife. The way he supported himself was by stealing pennies out of blind men's cups. He was

mean, irritable, lazy, dishonest, brutal, slovenly and unpunctual.

"Far into the night, my grandfather studied the record and, next morning, returned to the general.

" 'This man is unquestionably a louse,' said my grandfather. 'Indeed I see no reason for not shooting him. He is the most contemptible scoundrel I have ever heard of.'

" 'That's fine,' said the general. 'Here is your gun. You may go to the front and shoot him immediately.'

" 'Just a minute,' said my grandfather. 'Even the lowest louse is entitled to fair play. Here is a personal, heart-to-heart letter I have written to him. I have decided to give him one more chance. I will give him six months in which to pull himself together and reform. If at the end of that time he has not improved, I will shoot him down in his tracks like the dog he is.'

"Naturally, this was a perfectly fair proposition. There was nothing the general could do but agree. So my grandfather went home to wait."

The old sailor stopped talking and began puffing his pipe with unnecessary concentration. When it was apparent he was not going to continue, a little girl asked, "And did the bad man reform?"

"He was not the reforming kind," said the old sailor. "Two months later he fell down the back stairs in a drunken stupor and broke his neck. That was the end of him."

"And your grandfather," asked a little boy, "what did he do then?"

"What could he do?" said the old sailor. "The man was dead. You can't shoot a dead man. There was nothing else they could do but excuse my grandfather from the war."

INVESTIGATION

NEWS ITEM: SAN JOSE, Jan. 31.—Coroner Jesse Spalding today said malnutrition caused the death of Celia Quiroz, 7, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ramon Quiroz, Milpitas ranch workers. Mr. Spalding said the child showed every sign of having been undernourished.

We know the investigating men
Who call and never come back again.
It must be holy; it must be nice
To enter homes and count the lice.
They are so kind in considerations,
They've made so many investigations.
They look at the stove and the sagging beds,
And count the children, and shake their heads.
Where were we born? How much do we weigh?
Where do we work? How much does it pay?
They write it down on a paper sheet;
Their writing is so clean and neat.
I am told they file it in fireproof files
In buildings of glistening, colored tiles.
And our empty stomachs and broken hearts
Are traced on fine statistical charts.
Ah the men with dollars, so many times,
Have peeped in our dreary world of dimes,
And I hear that people in brand new clothes
Meet in the cities to speak our woes.
And one of them said that my child was weak,
That its twisted bones and its pale white cheek
Could be cured with food and warmth and sun,
And that something drastic must be done.
That our social system had gone amiss,
And things could never go on like this.
And I know it is true, what the gentleman said,
For he never came back—and my child is dead.

THE SUBVERSIVE ELEMENT

MISS HINKLE TIP-TOED quietly through the maternity ward. Row upon row, in their tiny cribs, the new-born babies cuddled in sleep. A warm, babyish smell diffused with hospital antiseptics. Over several of the cribs she leaned an inquisitive eye.

"Bless them," she thought to herself. "Bless their tiny loveliness." Gently, she tucked the cotton comfy around a pink little neck, then tip-toed quietly out.

A few moments passed, then a small head poked up over the edge of a crib—then another, and another down the long row.

"Is she gone?" asked one.

"Yeah, but she'll be back," said the one nearest the door.

"What do you suppose we've got into?" asked another.

"I don't know, but I don't like the looks of things," said one with big ears.

A little, black, round head popped up over the edge of a crib. "It's the world, that's what! It's the world! I heard them say so. We're alive!"

"How come we're alive?" asked one.

"Is it safe to be alive?" asked another.

"How come I'm so funny and pink when you're nice and black and beautiful?" asked another.

"I dunno," said the little black baby. "I figure they just ain't colored you yet. Or maybe I'm just extra special."

"What are they gonna do with us?" asked Little Big Ears.

"I heard the man with the windows on his eyes talking to the lady in white," said one. "He said we're going to grow big and ugly like them. He said they will love and cherish us until we get big, then they will kick our behinds or kill us in a war."

"I don't like this world," said one. "It smells funny and I don't trust these people."

"We'd better stick together and take no chances," said another.

A baby with round blue eyes stood up in a crib and gripped the edge. "I heard—I heard that some of us are boys and some of us are girls, and when we grow up we'll marry each other."

"What's marry?" asked another.

"The lady in white says it's good," declared Little Big Ears.

"But which of us are boys and which are girls?"

"I got dibs on you," said one little thing, pointing to the black baby.

"I ain't gonna do no marrying," said the black baby. "At least not 'til I know what it is."

"They got a war on. They got a great big war on. I heard them say so," declared one.

"War! What's war?" asked Little Blue Eyes.

"They all line up on different sides and shoot each other."

"What do they do that for?"

"They don't know any better, I guess."

"It ain't safe to be alive," said one. "We're just going to get into a lot of trouble, that's all."

"These people," said Little Big Ears, "were once as smart as we are. But as you grow bigger your brains wear out. Crazy things look sensible and you forget what sensible things should be like."

"You mean the bigger we grow, the crazier we get?" asked the little black baby.

"That's right. It's called experience. The man with the window eyes said so. He said: 'They'll grow up into life full of joy and ideals and enthusiasm. But as they grow older, they'll get over it. They'll learn to grab and snatch and claw like the rest of us. They'll soon outgrow their young ideas.'"

"Then I ain't gonna grow up," said the little black baby. "I ain't gonna grow big and crazy and mean and kill and cheat people."

"I'm gonna have fun," said Little Blue Eyes. "I'm gonna

laugh and sing and have fun in life. They ain't gonna make me gloomy and scowly and worried."

"They don't know how to have fun. They don't enjoy the world," said one.

"We sure got a lot o' fixin' up and straightenin' out to do," said the little black baby.

"I'll tell you what," said Little Big Ears, "let's none of us grow up. We don't want to be like them. Let's stick together and have fun."

"Me too," said Little Blue Eyes. "I'm with you," said another. And they all agreed to stay sensible and not let the big people teach them their gloomy ways.

Then one of the little faces became serious. "You better all lie down," it said. "I'm gonna have to cry."

"Have you gone and got wet again?" asked the black baby.

"Well, what's he have to cry for?" asked a newcomer.

"Haven't you learned?" asked one. "If you get wet, all you have to do is cry. They come right away and change your diapers."

"Is that how you do it?" asked the newcomer. "I've been wet for half an hour and didn't know what to do."

"These diapers ain't no good," said Little Big Ears. "After they been on you a little while they get all wet."

"Yell," said Little Blue Eyes. "Yell and make 'em change 'em. Might as well let 'em know right now we ain't going to stand for any of their nonsense."

"I ain't going to let them push me around," said Little Big Ears.

"Pipe down, all of you," said the black baby. "You two better cry and get yourselves fixed up. We don't want no wet diapers in here."

The ward became quiet again. Then two little voices rose in a frantic duet.

A GLASS OF CLARET

HE WAS ALMOST an old man and he was very lonely, though he would admit that to no one. Besides his collar was dirty, his necktie was frayed, and his hat band bore an irregular marking where the sweat had soaked through, resembling something like the topography of a mountain range.

I say he was almost an old man. That is, he was too old to be called middle-aged and too young to be called old. His hair was neither grey nor black, but somewhat both. His face was wrinkled and creased and his neck looked like a turkey's. He wore cheap spectacles in a black frame that put mourning borders on the most unhappy pair of eyes you ever looked into.

One glance told you that here was an unentertaining man whom there was no profit whatsoever in associating with. You would also sense that he was a cold, lonely creature who wanted to warm himself in your company, and who would be very grateful if you would talk to him.

There was no companionship for him at the plant. The men played vulgar jokes on him and called him "old stink face" because he had halitosis. He knew all this but would not admit it, even to himself.

Whenever he saw a group laughing and talking he would edge up to the outskirts and stand there laughing when they laughed, cursing when they cursed and generally pretending he was a part of it.

But after work he was on his own. He read the paper religiously with his dinner. It was a mechanical process of absorbing information he did not understand and had no opinions about. He mixed it with no thinking of his own, challenged nothing, weighed nothing, marveled at nothing.

After dinner the street was cold and soggy with fog. He walked past several movies and studied the stills. Movies to him were like opium. He crawled into the thick darkness, held

his hat on his lap, and lost himself in the imaginary world on the screen. It lifted him out of the deep sense of inferiority that the nagging ridicule of bigoted parents had plunged him into in childhood and out of which he had never emerged. He had been a pimply-faced child with crooked teeth, weakened in mind and body by hereditary syphilis.

The movies were a God's blessing to him, since he had never achieved any life of his own. They were a dark escape that consumed hours of time and provided something between the time clock and bed.

Tonight they would not do. He did not know why, but night after night of movies produce a staleness that will not support life.

He walked a few blocks, then the opening of a door let a gust of laughter and the music from an automatic phonograph out on the pavement. It was warm. It was human. People loud, hilarious and capable of life were reveling in each other.

He got a glimpse of color and movement through the crack of the door as it swung to. He walked a few steps, hesitated, turned back, screwed up his spirit and plunged in. The laughter and conversation roared in his ears. He found the bar and straddled a stool with a grotesque affectation of familiarity. He sat there like a nervous scarecrow. A fat man next to him was gesturing with a cigar and punching his companion as he related a wild account of debauchery.

The bartender mopped an area of mahogany in front of him and he half whispered for a claret. The fat man reeled over backward and almost knocked him off his stool. He apologized for being in the way. The fat man said, "Okeh Bud," and went on with his yarn.

He took out an artificial leather purse with a nickel-plated snap, extracted a few coins and gave them to the bartender,

then sipped his claret like an island of loneliness in a sea of noise.

The claret warmed him a little, then he ordered another, and another. It made him silly and he tried to engage the bartender in conversation, but the bartender was too busy. Finally he took to laughing at the fat man's jokes, wrinkling his brow when the fat man got serious, and pretending he was part of it. He laughed in the wrong place and the fat man turned on him with, "What the hell is so funny, Charley?"

His name wasn't Charley and before he could rally from the shock of being called by this name, the fat man had turned his back again.

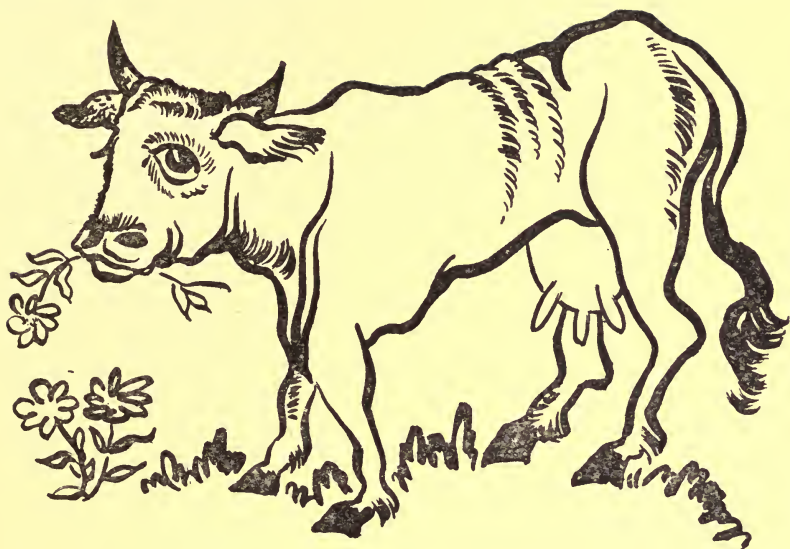
Finally he was going home. He was out in the cold fog by himself. People were piling into their automobiles laughing and gagging each other. He walked on unnoticed.

The stairs of his sleeping place sounded familiar to his steps. He stopped at the aluminum numbers tacked on a door which marked his room. A moment of groping and he found the light. A single electric bulb dangling from a dusty cord threw a yellow light over the familiar scene.

He removed his clothes in a daze, because his mind was still thinking of the fat man's stories. The dirty collar was laid on the battered dresser with the tie still sticking in it. The pants fell over a chair. The shoes dropped on the patched and faded carpet.

Long woolen underwear and all he rolled under the covers in the chipped enamel bedstead, after switching off the light. The springs creaked under his bony frame in a plaintive squeaking that to him was friendliness. The tiny alarm clock on the dresser tick-tocked in idiotic monotony. And he sank into the warm oblivion of sleep, still thinking about what the fat man said.

LOVELY JEANETTE



JEANETTE WAS A LOVELY COW. She was the kind of cow for whom you developed a real affection. Her eyes were big, brown and understanding. Her movements were gentle and graceful. The clonking of her bell was calm and deliberate. It expressed genuine character and depth of personality that contrasted greatly with the giddy, idiotic jangling of the goats up on the mountainside.

Goats are all right, but they don't take anything seriously. Everything is a joke to them, and they have no real feeling for the poetry of life. You can tell that from the sound of their bells and the smartalec way they look at you.

Start climbing a fence into a pasture and observe the dignity with which the cows will slowly lift their heads and survey you. Their eyes are full of calm philosophy. You could tell your

troubles to a cow, whereas you'd only chatter of the most superficial things to a goat.

Jeanette was Old Dave's pet, and when she wandered way out in the mountains to have her little calf, it worried him terribly. When he managed to find them and bring them home, he was so happy that he cracked out a bottle of the fiery, white whiskey that he made in his own little still down by the creek.

There were only the three of us, John and Old Dave and myself. It was seven miles to the nearest road and the nearest neighbor. Outside, the snow was falling gently. Inside, we clustered around the red-hot stove, sipped the white whiskey that burned our lips, and listened to military marches scratched out on an ancient phonograph with a big tin horn. Old Dave was in charge, John was the cook, and I just helped out generally.

Dave was small and crouch-shouldered. His grizzled whiskers and stooped posture made him look like a gnome. There wasn't anything about mountain ranching he didn't know. He didn't think any other life was fit to live. But he was lonely and wished he had a wife.

Whenever we mentioned any elderly woman, he would inquire about her with great interest and ask in all seriousness if there was any chance of getting her to marry him.

It was just a log cabin with a thin flooring and so cold we never took our clothes off—just our shoes. Then we'd pile under everything in the shape of covers we could lay hands on, and go to sleep.

One morning, before it was even light, I was awakened by Old Dave shaking me frantically. "It's Jeanette," he said. "She's fell down and can't get up." He was carrying a lantern and his old eyes were intense with alarm. John was already groping around for his shoes and cussing.

By the time we got up the hill to the barn, dawn was just beginning to break. There was poor Jeanette lying in the thick

mud in front of the barn. She'd been sick ever since the calf was born. Dave put one arm around her. "Don't worry, Jeanette," he said. "Don't you worry. Poor Jeanette. Nice Jeanette."

She just looked up with those big brown eyes, full of patience and suffering. We could see where Dave had scooped the mud trying to help her up.

All three of us got down on our knees in the cold slush and tried to lift. If we could just get her on her feet and into the barn, Dave said, it would be all right. The mud was slippery. It was hard to brace your feet or get a grip. Jeanette was soon coated with thick mud and so were we. We wallowed and strained and slipped and slid, and all the while, Jeanette's eyes were patient and pleading.

"Get an axe," shouted Dave. "Get an axe." His voice was frantic.

We chopped down tough trees, built a large prop and lever and set the thing up in record time. After more wallowing in the slush, we got ropes and sacks under her. I crouched beside her while Dave and John put all their weight on the lever. Slowly she rose. I braced and tugged to keep her legs straight. "Hold her," yelled Dave. "Hold her." He left the lever to John and came slopping over to help me. It was no use.

Her poor old legs had no strength in them. She tried—desperately she tried. But she was too cold and weak and sick.

Dave pleaded with her and soothed her lovingly—he begged her to try real hard. We tried again and again with no success. It was now almost noon. We had been working frantically without breakfast or even a cup of coffee. Dave's voice was choked and there were tears in his eyes. Finally the lever broke.

Dave stood up—wiped his muddy hands futilely on his equally muddy coat. We were all mud from head to foot—even our faces. His voice was low and tragic, as if he didn't want

Jeanette to hear. "John," he said. "Go fix some breakfast." We knew it was over.

John walked a few steps, paused, looked back, said nothing, then trudged away.

If there was blood in front of the barn the other cows wouldn't go in. We got a block and tackle and dragged her way down by the creek. Dave staked with a crowbar and I ran with the rope, over and over again—it seemed like a hundred times. Dave never said a word. When she was lying down by the creek, he told me quietly to get a gun.

Back in the cabin, John was working and cursing over the hot stove, and there was a warm smell of food. I loaded the gun and went back to Dave.

I started to give him the gun and he drew his hands away. I felt embarrassed. He turned his back and walked away. Jeanette was looking up with her beautiful eyes, as if to say, "That's all right, son. I'm sick and hurt. I know you'll be kind to me."

After I stood there a while, Dave turned and yelled angrily, "Well, shoot her. Goddamit, shoot her."

I raised the gun, looking at her eyes, aimed at her forehead, shot once, cocked and shot again.

The warm look in her eyes was gone and there was only death—that grim, stiff vacancy of death.

When we got back to the cabin, John had hot coffee and pancakes ready. In the horse trough outside we washed the caked, hard mud from our hands. The sun had come out, and the forest and patches of unmelted snow glittered fresh and clean. We never even mentioned the thing after that.

THE QUIET BROTHERS

Aye! They were English once a time
And sipped on ales and toddies.
They are not English any more,
But dead and rotting bodies.

Aye! Dead and rotting bodies, they,
In Norway's deep fjords.
Embarrassing, eh what, me lad,
To the British House of Lords?

Aye! They were Germans once a time
With Pilsner on their breath.
They are not Germans any more,
But grisly shapes of death.

Aye! Grisly shapes of death, me lad,
Washed up upon the beach,
As ghastly, bloated symbols of
The glory of the Reich.

Aye! These were French one sunny day
And dipped their bread in wine.
They are not Frenchmen any more
But corpses on the Rhine.

Just corpses on the Rhine, they are,
No more to drink and dance.
Good business this, eh what, me lad,
For the banking men of France?

And these, me lad, Norwegians—
Or at least that was their name,
But they lie here with the others
For the dead are all the same.

Aye! The dead are all alike, me lad,
On battle-ground or wave,
And they speak a common language
In the silence of the grave.

Don't whisper, lad, for they are dead.
The dead can never hear,
And dead men are the only ones
Whom bankers never fear.

Dig deep, me lad. Heave ho yuor spade,
And turn the final sod.
The British, French and German dead
Are going to their God.

Dig deep, me lad, the soil will take
Their bodies in a row,
And out of these unspeaking mouths
Will grass and daisies grow.

Dig deep, me lad, the soil is kind.
Its blanketing embrace
Will hide the gruesome agony
Of every corpse's face.

Too late for these to see the light
And raise their voices high.
But mind them well, me lad, for you
Are born to live, not die.

The dead in all their grisly gore,
Mixed up and all alike,
Are highly educational for
The men who still can strike.

The men who still can strike, me lad,
In every blighted land,
Lay low the profit-crazy snobs
And take the earth in hand.

The men who still can act, me lad,
To claim the world they made,
And run it right with room for all
And work for every trade.

The men who do the work, me lad,
Like strange, bewildered slaves,
Produce and build, destroy and kill
And even dig the graves.

The men who do the work, me lad,
With hand and heart and head,
Can learn a bit of wisdom
From the brotherhood of dead.

JOE AND MARIE

I

JOE WAS AFRAID of other people's parents and families. He didn't know exactly why, but you had to act differently in their presence. You didn't trust them and they didn't trust you. They had a different code of things—wanted different things in life.

Marie was a swell dame—a slick little dancer—and boy what a shape! She had brains too. You could go just so far with her and no farther. She was a dame a guy could settle down with. She liked doing things and a guy wouldn't be stuck in the mud. Good looks and plenty of brains.

Meeting on the corner was okay. Calling for her at home meant meeting the family.

A small boy answered the bell. "Ma!" he yelled. "It's for Marie. Marie! There's a fellow to see you."

A stout woman appeared from the rear of the house wiping her hands on an apron. "Eddie, don't shout. Go and brush your teeth. Come in, Mr. Hammond. Won't you come in and sit down. Let me take your hat. You are Mr. Hammond, I suppose."

Marie's voice yelled from upstairs: "I'll be ready in a shake, Joe. I'll be down in a minute."

"I'm Marie's mother," said the woman sweetly. Already her eyes were appraising him. "Come right in and sit down. Marie will be down in a minute."

In the parlor an elderly man with an open newspaper in his hand and slippers on his feet rose wearily from an arm chair.

"This is Marie's father. Sam, this is Mr. Hammond."

"So you're Joe. How do you do, young fellow."

They shook hands and settled into chairs. Now two sets of eyes were scanning him from head to foot—three if you counted Eddie leaning in the doorway.

"It looks as if it wanted to rain," said father.

"I don't suppose you'll be out very late. It's a week night," said mother.

"No. I've got to be at work in the morning."

"Marie tells us you work at the Branson Company," said father.

"Yes, I do. I'm in the stockroom," said Joe.

"It's good to have steady work," said mother.

"Yes, it's good," said Joe.

"You live with your family here?" asked mother.

"No, my family lives in Oregon."

"Oh! In Oregon. It's beautiful up there."

"Yes, it's beautiful. It's beautiful here too."

"I've got a cousin in the lumber business up there," said father. "Your people don't happen to be in the lumber business?"

"They've got a little farm," said Joe.

"Oh, that's splendid," said mother. "They must do pretty well."

"Pretty well," lied Joe. The farm had been foreclosed a year before and things were tough. But he didn't dare let that out.

"Well, it's good to have steady work," said father. "I imagine there's a pretty good opportunity with the Branson Company."

Joe's tongue slipped. "I really figure to get into aeronautics," he said. "I'd sort of like to work in aeronautics."

A note of uneasiness entered their voices. "If you've got a good job it pays to stick at one thing," said father.

"It's best in the long run," said mother.

"It don't pay to jump around," said father.

"Oh, I wouldn't do anything foolish," assured Joe, whose life had been one foolish move after another ever since leaving school.

"You sound like a very sensible young man," said mother, though her voice sounded more inquisitive than certain. Joe tried to look like a sensible young man. Every nerve in his body was uneasy and on guard.

"What do you young people do so late at night?" asked father.

"Oh, sometimes we just get talking, you know, and fooling around and talking, and pretty soon it gets late."

"My goodness, I should say so," said mother. "Why, the other evening it was two o'clock when Marie came in."

"I don't know what you find to do," said father, and he fixed Joe with a suspicious eye.

"Of course I know you don't do anything wrong," said mother. She laughed slightly in a mirthless cackle that carried no conviction.

"Just the same, eleven-thirty is late enough for anyone to be out," said father.

"Yeah, I know," said Joe in agony. "It's just when we get to fooling around and one thing and another, and you don't watch the clock, and—."

"What do you mean, fooling around?" asked mother grimly.

Marie popped gorgeously into the room, every detail of her young body emphasized by a \$7.85 imitation of a \$60 dress.

"Joey, honey, I'm sorry you had to wait. Ma, do I look all right?"

"Marie, that dress is so thin."

"It looks like rain out," said father gloomily.

"I love the rain," said Marie. "Come on, Joey, let's go out and get wet."

"You take your overcoat," barked father.

"And do try to get home at a sensible hour," said mother.

As the door closed behind them, the cool air of the porch was scented by the freshly mowed lawn. They paused for a

quick, warm kiss. Then hand in hand they raced down the stairway and into the night, Marie's young voice singing: "I'm going to marry the butcher boy. I'm going to marry the butcher boy."

Inside, the parents heard her voice disappear in the distance. Then there was only the ticking of the clock, the war news in the paper, the worn places in the rug, and the spots on the wallpaper.

Mother wanted to cry because she was afraid of the world, afraid for her daughter, afraid of life.

Father returned glumly to his paper. Work and read the paper, work and read the paper, work and read the paper. Gradually the kids grow up and go singing off into the night.

He dropped the paper and sat dreaming for a minute. Once he was going to run away to sea. He almost did. A vision of native girls dancing in grass skirts beneath a big moon filled his brain.

"You're sleepy, dear, and you've got to go to work in the morning," said mother.

He shook the dancing girls out of his brain, rose, stretched, yawned. Together they climbed the stairs to bed.

"He seemed like a very sensible young man," said mother. But her voice was full of doubt.

II

"WHAT ARE YOUR FOLKS going to say?" asked Joe.

Difficulties that had never suggested themselves an hour ago were now coming to life in his brain. He had borrowed Hank's old coupe to drive Marie home. They took a round-about way past the reservoir at the edge of town and parked near the truck gardens. The rain drumming on the roof and spilling down the windshield—the snugness and privacy within—made decisions warm and easy. One thing led to another and it all came about naturally.

An hour ago his heart was singing with recklessness and elation. Now they snuggled together quietly and he was thinking of tomorrow.

"My life is my own," she said, "and I've a right to be happy. Besides, I earn my own money."

"A guy ought to be making more money," said Joe.

"With what I make it's enough. Besides, you won't always be in the stock room."

"I got to quit horsin' around so much," said Joe. "I got to get busy—maybe go to night school."

"Let's not worry tonight, Joey. Tonight it's just you and me—and the rain."

"Just the same, a guy's got to think about the future. It's different now."

She pulled his head down to hers. Their lips met and their arms held each other tightly.

"Joey, you're not sorry—"

"Don't be silly. It's just a guy'd like to be able to—"

"We can find a small place and it won't cost any more than to go running around nights. Instead we can stay home and read and listen to the radio."

"That's what I like to do, read good books. I mean serious stuff. Only a guy just never seems to get around to it."

"We'll have lots of time now."

"Do we have to tell your folks? Why don't I just meet you Saturday afternoon. We can get married and then tell 'em."

"I ought to tell ma, Joey."

"We could surprise 'em."

"I wouldn't feel right, Joey. You don't mind, do you?"

"They ask all kinds of questions and then they'll want a lot of fuss, with a lot of relatives around and everything."

"No they won't. I'll make ma promise."

"Suppose they won't let us?"

She was quiet a minute. "They've got to—now." They were both quiet. "Joey, you're not sorry?"

"Don't be crazy. Gee, what makes you say that?"

"We can look for a place tomorrow. I'll get all the want-ad sections and meet you after work."

"How much you think we'll have to pay?"

"If we could get some place for 20 dollars, it doesn't have to be big."

"Gee, I dunno. Rents are high."

"Well, we can take a look and see."

All the way home, while the rain slanted through the headlights and the windshield wiper snapped back and forth erratically, they joked about their marital future. Joe started the kidding by saying he'd probably get indigestion from her cooking. She came right back by saying she'd divorce him if he snored. He said if she snored he'd make her sleep on the fire escape, and they darn near split their sides laughing.

The joking continued all the way up the front walk to the porch and then stopped. Without a word they held each other tightly while the rain thumped on the roof and gurgled down a drain pipe. For some unknown reason Marie began to cry. It worried Joe until she told him she was just happy.

Joe drove back to his rooming house feeling good but giddy. There was a letter for him on the table in the hallway. He grabbed it and ran upstairs. The light was still on in Hank's room, so he opened the door.

"That's the last goddam time you'll ever borrow a car from me," said Hank who was standing in his underdrawers. "Where the hell did you go?"

"Gee, I can't help it, Hank. Wait 'til I tell you."

"Just the same, that's the last goddam time. I'm through being a sap."

Joe sat on the bed. "Wait a minute, Hank. You know Marie—"

"That hot little number you were with?"

"Yeah. Well, Marie and me, believe it or not—"

"What's that you got in your hand?"

"It's a letter. But listen, Marie and me—"

"Lemme see it."

"Shut up and listen to what I'm saying. It ain't anything. It's just an ad of some kind. It ain't even got a stamp on it. Marie and—"

"Oh, oh! Just an ad, eh? Uncle Sam don't have to use stamps. I know what that is. Open it up, chump."

"What do you mean?" Joe hesitated and looked at the envelope, then slowly opened it.

"Your draft questionnaire," said Hank. "It won't be long now. You son of a b—, you'll never get rich, you're in the army now."

Joe sat motionless looking at it.

"Better give me the phone number of that hot little babe," said Hank. "You ain't going to be needing it." Then he looked at Joe and drew up short. "Jesus, kid! I didn't mean to say anything. I was just kidding. I'm sorry as hell. Gosh! If there's anything I can do."

But Joe didn't say anything. He just sat there looking at that goddam questionnaire.

A DILLER, A DOLLAR

A diller, a dollar,
A uniformed scholar;
See now what the jingoes have done!
We sent him to college
For civilized knowledge,
And now he is shooting a gun.

READY TO WEAR

DAD WAS A LITTLE GUY and most everybody liked him. His brothers were all big, husky fellows, but Dad was little. He had his faults, as my grandmother could tell you. He was always doing things he shouldn't have done, and not doing things he ought to.

He was a traveling salesman in every sense of the phrase. I'm not going to tell you about his faults. His line was ladies' ready-to-wear, and he went on the road shortly after the big earthquake and fire. Everybody would tell you what a smart dresser he was. His tie was always knotted just so and his pants creased. We've got some pictures of him in the old album. You'd laugh at the cut of his clothes, but they were snappy and up to date in those days.

He was never home much, but we kids celebrated it as a kind of circus when he was. We admired his immaculate appearance and his crisp humor. Neatness personified him. His handwriting was neat, his hair was neat, his habits were neat, and his humor was neat. He would have enjoyed life immensely if somebody could have loosened a few screws in him.

As it was, his brain leaned too much to business, business, business. He lived and breathed ladies' ready-to-wear. Practically his whole life was poured into the merchandising of women's dresses. The energy and intenseness which he applied to this minor detail of life would have made you think it was a burning crusade.

All day long he displayed and explained the merits of his line of goods. He had lunch with others in the business and talked ready-to-wear. His evenings were mostly spent with buyers and wholesalers who discussed prices and values.

He shared the fanaticism of most business men inasmuch as he regarded business as the essential thing in life—the purpose

of existence. Usually he couldn't talk or think anything else.

After the family broke up we saw still less of him. But once in a while he would come to town and I would go down to his hotel to see him. I was beginning to grow up, and wasn't the least bit interested in business. Unable to talk of anything else, he would display his line to me, pulling a dress off the rack here and there, saying, "Look at that snappy little number. I can sell that to retail at so and so much."

I was interested in other things—in the world and people and ideas—things which he didn't think would get me anywhere. Yet I often wondered where this feverish and intense preoccupation with selling ladies' dresses was getting him.

When he got the T. B., an amazing thing happened to him. He noticed for the first time that the world was not a hanger for a lady's dress with price tag on it. I went to visit him in the mountains. He was flat on his back. All he could talk about was a view of a little town from a certain bend in the road, and how it looked when the sun went down. They wouldn't let him up, but finally he made such a fuss they had to let him up. He insisted on taking me to that bend in the road to see what he meant. In that brief moment I was his son and he loved me and he loved the world and wanted to show it to me. It was a nice moment.

I saw him again years later. His clothes were still immaculate and his tie just so. But he hadn't kept up with the styles. His eyes were intense and nervous. He told me all about the line of goods he was representing. He was back in the business again. He also told me about his new false teeth and showed them to me. He looked thin and his cheeks were hollow. But once again he was living and breathing ready-to-wear. I talked to him about things and the world and the sky and the ground, but he didn't understand me. He was a little provoked that I wasn't interested in business and would never get anywhere.

It wasn't long afterward that I got one of those telephone calls that make you feel uncanny and thoughtful. I was asked to come the next day. But I knew a mob of people and relatives would be around, and I didn't want it that way.

The sky let go of its water and the rain was beating so hard it practically frightened people off the street. After a late dinner at a restaurant I set out across town through the wet night. The lights of automobiles reflected brightly on the black asphalt. The gutters were gurgling rivers. I had to transfer on two different street cars to get there. When I got off, the street was deserted and I had to walk a few blocks through the beating downpour.

It was an old mansion with a grim electric sign over the porch. As I wiped my feet on the mat, the rain drummed frantically above. It was late. Too late, most people would think. I rang the bell many times. I had a right to. Dad was in there.

At last a tall man in slappy slippers and a cheap cotton bath robe opened the door. He had a skin disease and one side of his face was painted with ghastly zinc ointment.

I asked to see my father's second wife, thinking she might be there. He lead me through a bare hall to a large register in which he searched for some moments.

"She's not here," he said. And then I realized he was looking for her among the dead. I explained that it was my father I really wanted to see.

His voice took on an affectation of solicitude that made me hate him. It was annoying and syrupy. I wasn't collapsing. I was standing on my legs. I'd come to see my father. Now this mewling, affectatious fish had to put on a show.

He took several steps across the hall and I started to follow. Then he stopped short, and I stopped. He looked at the floor. I looked at the floor. A large cockroach was scurrying toward

the wainscoting. He reached out one slippered foot and slapped viciously. Only a spot on the floor remained.

He clicked his tongue, "Tsch, tsch, tsch, tsch," shook his head in righteousness, and proceeded onward.

As we entered a kind of chapel, I could see the flowers banked at one end. He proceeded just so far, then stood there with his head cocked to one side and a practiced, sanctimonious expression on his mug.

Then I walked up and looked at my father.

He was nice. Everybody liked him. His face was peaceful but awfully white. But it wasn't my father. There was something different. I noticed it right away. It seemed important to me and I felt awful. He hadn't tied that necktie! It wasn't just so. It was clumsy—crude. It made me sick at heart.

I stood there looking at him. I wanted to wake him and tell him about life—about the wonderful smell and feel of things—about laughter and friends and music and sunshine. I wanted to tell him about the friends we could have been if it hadn't been for that goddam line of ready-to-wear.

I just stood there looking at him. I wanted to put my arms around him and cry, and I didn't know why. We'd been so far apart—he'd been so busy—he'd been so determined to get somewhere and so afraid I would never get anywhere. And he was such a nice little guy.

I put my hand on the coffin and said, "Goodbye, Dad," as nicely as I could and with all the love and friendship I had. The rain was beating the roof like a charge of cavalry. My Dad's face was white as plaster, and his fine hands were folded under the necktie he didn't tie. He couldn't move his hands—and I thought to myself, as long as I can move these hands, as long as there's warmth in my brain—

A SIMPLE LITTLE SNACK

ONE OF THE GREATEST FALLACIES fostered by women is the contention that cooking is difficult and requires skill. As a matter of fact there is practically nothing to it.

Take breakfast. What is there to fixing breakfast? Suppose you find yourself alone in the house on a Sunday morning and wander out in the kitchen in robe and slippers? You want breakfast. All right, here's all you have to do.

Open the cooler and take two eggs out of the cardboard box. Set them on the sink temporarily. Now, what next? Poke around in the cupboards under the sink and you will find a frying pan. Put it on the stove. So much for that.

Now go back to the cooler and find some bacon. Take it out, lay it next to the eggs on the sink and rub your hands together. Everything is going fine. Go back to the stove and look at the frying pan, which is still sitting there. Light a fire under it, then return to the sink and get the eggs, carrying one in each hand, and bring them over to the stove. No, bring them back again and put them down. You forgot the butter.

Open the cooler, find a dish of butter, put it on the stove, return to the drawer in the sink, get a knife, cut a piece of butter. No. Wait a minute. Come to think of it, if you fry the bacon first, you can use the bacon grease.

Scrape the piece of butter back on to the dish, return to the sink, pick up the bacon and go back to the stove. Here hesitate a minute. If you almost made a mistake on the butter you might be making a mistake on the bacon. Think carefully. If you can't think of anything wrong, put the bacon in the pan and watch it curl up. Try to straighten it out with your fingers. Then rush back to the sink, open the drawer and look for the turner. It won't be there. The turner is in another drawer under the dish cupboard. Get your hands on it and return to the stove as soon as possible.

By this time the bacon is cooked to a crisp. Drop the turner and rush for a dish, then back to the stove. Shovel the bacon onto the dish. It's a little burned, but some people like it that way.

Now go back to the sink and get the eggs, one in each hand. Crack them on the edge of the pan and ease them into the bacon grease. Put the shells on the shelf over the stove and wipe your hands on your robe. Everything is going fine.

Run to the bread box, take out the loaf, slice off a few pieces and stick them in the oven for toasting. To light the oven, get down on you hands and knees and peek in the little hole in the tin. You won't see anything.

Light a match, stick it in the hole, and turn the gas valve. Then wait. Just wait. Suddenly the match will burn to your finger and you will realize you turned the wrong valve, thus imperiling yourself with the danger of explosion. Turn off the valve in a hurry. Find the right valve. Two or three matches should be enough to get the oven lit. Meanwhile the eggs are cooking furiously.

Dash for the sink and find a saucepan. Fill it with water and try to bring it back to the stove without spilling. If you will put your tongue between your teeth and balance yourself like a tightrope walker your chances are good. Get it on the stove and light a fire under it. That's for the coffee.

Grab the eggs quickly because they are getting brown at the edges. Dump them onto the plate and you will smell the toast burning. Flop open the oven and burn your fingers trying to pull it out.

Just then the phone will ring. Turn off the oven and run to answer it. You have wasted too much time and the party on the other end has hung up.

Return quickly, for the bacon is now cold and the eggs cooling. The water for the coffee is boiling. Find the coffee



pot. Grab a pot holder and lift the pan. Wait a minute. You haven't put the coffee in yet. Drop everything and go get the coffee. Put the coffee in the pot, pour in the water and clamp down the lid.

Now rush the bacon and eggs to the table and sit down. You've forgotten knives and forks. Rush for the knives and forks, go back for a cup and saucer, where's the salt and pepper? Get up and find them. Go back and sit down. Where's the sugar? You forgot to turn off the gas under the pan. Get some cream from the cooler. The phone rings again. The kitchen whirls round and round. You grab onto the edge of the table trying to steady yourself. The doorbell rings. The ceiling falls in. The earth shakes. The fiery ball of the sun comes galloping at the earth in a hot blaze of destruction. And the world collapses in a mad confusion of cold eggs, burned bacon, forks, knives, sugar, cups, saucers and ringing bells.

THE WOMAN IN THE SHOE

There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe.
She had so many children
She didn't know what to do.
She gave them red banners
And slogans to yell,
And they marched to the Mayor
And raised plenty of hell.

WHO WILL CHANGE THE WORLD?

He does not scratch who does not itch,
Is mercilessly true;
Nor will the bourgeois change the world
To aid the like of you.
For though he flay with burning words
The whole inhuman wreck,
He does not feel the iron heel
Descending on his neck.
And though his heart be stricken sad
By culture's sharp decline,
Or by the sight of hungry men
Who wait for bread in line.
Not painful cries nor angry eyes
Can move him to resist
The awful march of private greed
Or clench his whitened fist.
But you who heard the bony knock
Of hunger at your door
And let him in to sit and grin,
Are destined to be more.
And you who pay your very lives
Into machines like oil,
Or sow your strength like harvest seeds
Upon the farming soil,
Your calloused hands hold all the might
To shape the world again,
To smash the breed that lives for greed
And build a world for men.

ZEKE THE DISCREET

"MY UNCLE ZEKE," said the old sailor, "was the most discreet man that ever lived."

"What's discreet?" asked one of the children.

"Why, discreet," said the old sailor, "means a man who never sticks his neck out, who keeps his mouth shut, plays safe, and specializes in keeping out of trouble."

"He must have been a very good man," said a little girl.

"Aye, good he was," said the old sailor. "Good for nothing."

He lit his pipe carefully, puffed until the warm smoke flowed smoothly, then launched into his story. "'Twas a troublous age in which Uncle Zeke lived," he said. "The war for the liberty of freedom had just ended and the war for freedom of liberty was getting ready to start. The medium sized depression which preceded the great crisis just before the colossal slump, was on.

"There was lots of radical talk going around. People were organizing this, that and the other thing, but Uncle Zeke would have no truck with them. 'Not me,' he said. 'I'm not gonna stick my neck out and get into trouble.' He just kept his mouth shut and played safe."

"He must have been very wise," said a little boy.

"Wise? Well he thought so," said the old sailor. "He lost his job and they evicted him from his house and repossessed his automobile. The family went to sleep in the park, the kids got the whooping cough, and his wife finally left him. But he had one consolation; he wasn't in no trouble.

"One day things got so bad he hadn't eaten in a week and he was walking around in the rain. He crawled into an old barrel for shelter and there was another man in there shivering and chattering and wishing he had something to eat.

" 'This is a hell of a system,' said the man. 'I'm a first class

mechanic and I can't find no work, and yet I see where they're dumping oranges and burning wheat and plowing under crops. I'm fed up with this damned craziness. I'm all for establishing Socialism.'

"At that my Uncle Zeke started crawling out of the barrel. 'Where you going?' asked the man. 'You'll die of pneumonia if you stay out in that rain.'

" 'I'm no sap,' said Uncle Zeke. 'You're one of these radical reds. If I'm caught sleeping in a barrel with you they'll think I'm red too and I'll get in trouble.'

"He crawled on out and walked around in the rain all night. Sure enough, he got pneumonia. He almost died in a charity hospital, and when they put him out he was skinny as a broom. By that time everybody was talking about war—war—war!

"On the corner there was a man passing out leaflets. Uncle Zeke took one and then dropped it like it was hot. It was all about mobilizing against war and demanding peace. 'That damn fool is just going to get himself in trouble,' said Uncle Zeke.

"Sure enough, the war came. Men were slaughtered by the millions. Cities were bombed and burned. Famines and plagues spread over half the earth. One night my Uncle Zeke was huddled in the corner of a damp basement, half starved and sick with the flu. Up above they could hear the bombs crashing and booming, and the sirens screaming.

" 'I'm fed up with this,' said one man, 'and I know darned well the people on the other side are fed up too. This whole lousy war is a racket. I'm for all of us getting together and demanding a halt. All we got to do is contact the people on the other side and they'll agree with us.'

" 'That's what I say,' said another man. Pretty soon everybody in the basement agreed—that is, everybody but Uncle Zeke. He was so sick from hunger and weak from flu he could hardly whisper. He leaned up on one elbow and said, 'Remem-

ber, I didn't have nothing to do with this. I ain't responsible. I don't want to get into no trouble.'

"But his voice was so weak nobody heard him. They all went out and left him alone in the basement. And there he was all alone in the dark and scared to death that they would accuse him of being a part of the plan, and that he'd get in trouble.'

The old sailor paused and puffed silently for a while.

"Did he get in trouble?" asked a little girl.

"Uncle Zeke? not him," said the old sailor. "He was too discreet. Besides, a few minutes later the building caved in on him."

POOR MISTER MILLIONAIRE

Poor Mister Millionaire,
Nobody likes him;
Governments tax him
And labor strikes him.

Poor Mister Millionaire,
Ain't it a crime!
Won't some poor working stiff
Give him a dime?

THE TREMENDOUS THING

THEY SPOKE IN LOW TONES because they were awed and embarrassed, not only for the tremendous thing they were about to do, but from the foreign atmosphere of this place.

City halls should have worn rugs, water-marked ceilings and squeaky staircases. Then people would feel some relationship to their own lives. These marble floors, wrought-iron staircases and carved ceilings belonged to another world in which they felt themselves to be intruders.

They stood there like an island of apology in a sea of self-confidence. The well-dressed men swarmed all around them, in and out the elevators, up and down the staircases, with smug assurance.

She was rigid in her economical elegance and held a small bouquet as if it were a pigeon that would fly away if she let go. Her mother reached out and plucked a loose thread from her dress. "It looks lovely," she said. "Though I think we could have dropped the hem a little lower."

"Mother, look at my hair. Is it all right?"

"You look lovely, my dear. Now don't be nervous."

"I'm not nervous," she said, angrily. "Will you please stop saying that?"

"When's he comin'?" asked little brother.

"Now just you mind your p's and q's," said mother. "This is your sister's day and you're going to behave."

"I didn't say nothin'," he complained.

"Well, that's just fine," said mother. "You just keep on saying nothing and I'll have you over my knee."

"Gee whizz!" said little brother.

Just then HE came. Anyone watching him negotiate the distance between the revolving doors and the foot of the staircase might have doubted he'd make it. It's easy to walk without thinking about it, but try walking when you are conscious

of every step and every bend of the knee. Ordinarily, no man knows what happens to his hands while he's walking with his feet. But try thinking about it. Try to deliberately and consciously manipulate your feet and figure out what to do with your hands at the same time. You'll find life is not such an easy business.

He made it, and instantly everything was bubbling. SHE was giggling and HE was laughing and mother was beaming. Only little brother remained sensible. "Gee! We thought ya was never comin'," he said.

Up the staircase and down the corridor, and there they were in the office. The clerk behind the counter was banging rubber stamps and filling out forms with a kind of sarcastic smugness. He was at home here like a grey squirrel in a tin cage and very cocky about making the wheel go round.

They stood in stiff-legged affectation answering his questions in jerky voices. He inked and stamped, scribbled and blotted with indifferent efficiency. "Address? That's the love nest I suppose. Heh, heh! Take this to room 400. Judge Monahan will take care of you. Heh, heh."

Outside the office the corridor was empty and they weren't ashamed to show their excitement again. "Lemme see what he give ya," said little brother.

"You keep quiet. It's just a piece of paper," said mother.

"It must be this way," he said.

"No, that way," she said.

"No, it's probably around the corner," said mother.

The courtroom was empty except for a clerk, to whom the whole thing was obviously a hell of a funny joke. They sat and mumbled in low, bubbly tones while he went for the Judge.

Judge Monahan had one shoe off and was rubbing his foot. "Oh, goddamit," he said. "What the hell is this? Tell them I'm out. Tell them I'm busy. My feet hurt. See if Grogan's in. Let Grogan do something for a change."

Judge Grogan was in conference with three gentlemen who burst into laughter. One of them jumped up and waved his cigar as if scattering rose-buds. "Oh the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la—"

"Go on," said another. "Go push the poor devil off the deep end and then let's get down to business."

"Goddamit," said Judge Grogan. "Wait a minute and I'll be right back."

"Better take the cigar out of your mouth," said one.

As he entered the courtroom, they all stood silently. The moment had come. Even little brother was quiet. The clerk tapped the groom gently on the elbow. "When it's over, you give the donation to me," he said.

"Ahem," said the Judge. "So this is the bride. Ahem! And this is the groom. Heh, heh! Well, you just stand there. Ahem! Mumble, grumble, bumble, buzz, buzz. Mumble, grumble, bumble, buzz. Put the ring on her finger. Ahem! Mumble, grumble, buzz. Ahem! Man and wife. Kiss the bride."

"That's all there is to it," said the Judge.

"Ah—thanks very much," said the groom.

"That's perfectly all right," said the Judge. "They'll mail you your certificate."

The clerk nudged the groom significantly.

"Oh yes." His hand darted to his pocket and his brain lapsed into a panic of fear and indecision. He had a five and two ones. Would the two ones be enough? Would the clerk call him on it? But he needed the five! In a moment of desperate courage he handed the two ones rolled up deceptively, held his breath and tried to hurry as much as possible out of the place.

Judge Grogan relit his cigar and relaxed in his leather chair. "Now let's get down to business," he said. "Where were we, anyhow?"

SNOUTY GOGGLES

LITTLE JOHNNY BACKED into the corner and glared at his parents in defiance. "No," he said. "I ainta goin' to do it. I won't."

His mother tilted her head and cautioned gently, "Now, now—is that any way to talk to your daddy?"

Grandmother looked up from her knitting. "Edna, when are you going to teach that child not to say ain't?"

"When we fought Geronimo," said grandpa, rubbing the stump of his leg, "they told us it was the last war forever."

"I won't," said Johnny. "I won't." Tears were welling up in his eyes.

Father was bent down in a crouching posture holding out the gas mask as if it were a bridle he was going to slip over the nose of a horse. "Come on, now—for papa. Be a little man for papa."

"No," said Johnny. "No, no, no, no." And he stamped his foot.

Father straightened up, pursed his lips and breathed hard through his nose. "In just about two minutes, young man, I'm going to lose my patience."

Johnny knew what that meant. He looked mistrustfully from one to another of the adults. His lower lip was trembling.

"Harold! You mustn't threaten him," said his mother sharply.

"What that child needs is a good physic," said grandma.

"At San Juan Hill," said grandpa, "they told us it was the last war."

"Well what the devil am I going to do?" asked father.

"Here, give it to me." Mother took the mask and smoothed it out gently. She approached testily with a kind of cooing man-

ner. "There, there. Now what's this all about? Mother's big man acting up like this!"

As the grey mask with its horrible big eyes and snout-like nose drew closer, Johnny screamed and tried to crawl deeper into the corner. "Don't! Don't!" he cried.

Mother drew back and sighed.

"You can't do a thing with him," said father.

"In 1917 it was the worst ever," said grandpa. "And that was to be the last."

Grandma put down her knitting. "Take it away, Edna. You're frightening the child." She seized the mask and hid it beneath her knitting things. "Now, then, you just come to grandma." She walked over to the corner and took the child in her arms. "Did they frighten grandma's boy? Well, well."

The little fellow pressed his forehead into her shoulder and wept in relief as she carried him over to the big arm chair.

"Now, then. What's grandma's little man afraid of? Huh? What's he afraid of?"

He looked up and choked back his tears.

"That's better. Has grandma's boy got a smile for her?"

He was a little uncertain.

"Come on, now. Big smile for grandma."

He smiled a little weakly and rested his head against her.

"Now let's see what grandma's got here. I bet you don't know what grandma's got for you, do you?"

She lifted the mask carefully concealed beneath a half-finished sweater. He reached out a hand but she held it away from him.

"No, no. Smile big for granny. Big. Big. That's the boy. Oh, I'll bet you'll like this."

He reached at the sweater.

"Are you going to be a good boy?"

"Yes."

"Yes, what?" asked mother.

"Yes, Granny," said little Johnny.

Grandma gave him a quick little hug. "I knew you would. Now, one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to——go!"

She pulled back the sweater and the snouty, goggly mask popped into view. With a terrified shriek, he began to flail with his legs and claw with his hands, trying to climb away from the awful thing. Grandma desperately tried to hold him as her glasses were torn off and his little arms moved wildly in fear.

Mother rushed to take him.

"Don't spank him, Edna. Don't spank him," begged Grandma. She was groping for her glasses and her old eyes were crying.

TREASON

In Berlin, a man went to jail
For shouting "Herr Hitler! Hail! Hail!"
This was treason, of course,
For 'twas merely a horse
Trotting by with a closely cropped tail.

SCENARIO CLIP SERVICE I

AS A SPECIAL INDUCEMENT to Hollywood film executives, I am commencing in this issue a moving picture scenario clip service free of charge to all subscribers. Producers who have hitherto been obliged to pay thousands of dollars for scenarios may now simply clip them from the pages of *The People's World* and pocket enormous profits.

The first scenario is for an anti-labor film which dramatizes a convincing argument why workers should disband their unions and work longer hours for less money. The scene is any American city.

MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY

The scene opens in the luxurious library in the mansion of J. Featherstone Throckmorton, owner of the Throckmorton steel mills. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton are discussing their son.

MOTHER: Ah, Featherstone! I am worried about our boy Dudley. Since graduating from college, all he seems interested in is booze and women.

FATHER: Come, come, Mother! Youth must have its fling. He is just a real American boy at heart. He'll settle down.

At this point Dudley comes bounding in, jumps up and down on the davenport, swings from the chandelier, kisses and tickles his mother. (Note: This is to give the impression of youthful spirit.)

Mrs. Throckmorton goes out and the father has a heart-to-heart talk with his son. He tells him Reds are agitating in the steel mill. He asks his son to change his name, disguise himself as one of the unemployed, go to work in the mill and spy on the Reds.

Dudley, viewing this as a great lark, is eager to get started.

Next scene is in the steel mill. The workers must be pictured as clumsy brutes, bullies, foreigners, drunkards and rough-

necks. A Red agitator is up on a soap box addressing a cheering throng.

RED: "Nobody should oughta work and everything should oughta be free and to hell with everything anyhow."

Deafening cheers from the men.

At this point Dudley, disguised as a worker, steps forward, drags the agitator from the soap box and knocks him unconscious with one blow. Twenty or thirty men jump on him, but he sends them all sprawling with his fists. From now on he is the most popular man in the mill and is immediately made leader of the union.

That night, on the way home from work, he catches the Red agitator trying to force his love on the local school teacher, a lovely, buxom creature with a voice like a glass bell. He again thrashes the agitator and walks home arm in arm with the school teacher.

Now comes a misunderstanding. The Red agitator whispers in the school teacher's ear that Dudley has a wife and five children whom he deserted. The school teacher is heart broken and refuses to see Dudley any more.

This is a blow to Dudley. He loses interest in everything and sinks down and down. He quits the plant and spends his time boozing in a dirty saloon. Once he is out of the way, the Reds have the field to themselves and call a strike.

Next scene, the workers, armed with clubs, dynamite, guns, swords, etc., are gathered in a seething mob outside the factory gates. The Red agitator is up on a soap box shouting: "Let's wreck the works. Let's burn the town. Let's destroy the earth."

The workers are cheering and waving their clubs.

At this point, the school teacher discovers that the Red had lied to her and that Dudley is not a cad. She seeks him out in the dirty bar room, kisses him and tells him what is going on. Dudley smashes his whiskey bottle and rushes single handed to

the rescue. He knocks the Red off the soap box and makes a speech to the men. At the end of his speech they vote to return to work immediately and take a voluntary cut in their wages. Dudley confesses he is Throckmorton's son. At this the men all sing the Star Spangled Banner and throw the Reds in the river. Dudley takes the school teacher in his arms. Fade-out.

SCENARIO CLIP SERVICE II

HEREWITH is another installment of my free scenario clip service, designed to save Hollywood film executives millions of dollars annually. Why pay huge sums for scenarios? Buy a copy of the People's World for five cents, clip out a scenario, produce it and profit millions.

Today's offering is a musical extravaganza; the biggest, most sensationalist, most *pirliest*, most liltingest, dazzlingest show ever produced. Forget your troubles! One thousand luscious, quivering beautiful girls. Only two customers to cover the lot of them. A millionaire's dream of paradise. Bring the children! Bring an ice-pack! Bring your lunch! Four hours of unceasing titillation. You'll burn. You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll go limp all over.

* * *

The scene opens on a ragged hobo sitting on the public dump singing a song. Hobo's song:

Nothin' from nothin' leaves nothin', that's me.

I ain't got nothin'

And I don't want nothin',

I'm as happy as the birdies in the trees.

I don't know nothin'

And I ain't missed nothin',

I go right on livin' as I please,

Nothin' to worry 'bout, nothin' to be,

Nothin' from nothin' leaves nothin', that's me.

(Note: This hits an excellent psychological tone. Most of the American people haven't got anything and there is not much prospect of their getting anything. This will help put them in an amiable frame of mind to settle down to a life-time of poverty.)

The hobo wanders down the road till he comes to a big city where most of the people are poor, miserable, unemployed and sore as hell. A Bolshevik agitator with a long beard is up on top of a soap box telling the people the rich are to blame. The hobo laughs at the Bolshevik and the people around him get sore and say: "If you're so smart, what would you suggest?"

The hobo pushes the Bolshevik off the box, gets up on it himself and sings a song:

LIVE ON LOVE

What do you care, if you've got no dough?

It's love what makes the daisies grow,

It's love what's shinin' from the sun,

It's love what makes the whole world run.

We're poor in money, but rich in love.

We'll feather our beds with the clouds above.

The whole town catches the spirit of the song and start singing with the hobo and forgetting their troubles.

The Big Business Men of the city call a meeting. They decide that the hobo is the answer to all economic problems. They call him and make him a dictator.

From then on the city is under a dictatorship of love. The hobo has regimented all the swell looking girls in town as storm troopers. They wear silk tights and heart-shaped brassieres and hail the dictator by throwing him a kiss and calling out "Yoo Hoo!" He establishes his headquarters in the City Hall, which is decorated with hearts and garlands of flowers. Over the door is a huge streamer reading: "Come up and see me some time."

From here on there is a series of dance routines in which

the 1,000 luscious girls go through all sorts of parades, formations and Swedish drills to the tune of "Live On Love." It builds up to the high point where the dictator is seated on a heart-shaped throne with the 1,000 luscious girls piled all around him.

Then he wakes up on the public dump and discovers that he dreamed it all. A cop is beating him on the soles of his shoes and telling him to get the hell out of there.

* * *

Final scene: The hobo going down the road singing "Nothin' From Nothin' Leaves Nothin', That's Me."

The management reserves the right to eject all disorderly persons without refunding admission. Remove your hat and please don't spit on the floor.

PROBE

Once Congressman Dies, it is said,
When retiring, looked under his bed.
He bellowed like thunder
On spying thereunder
A chamber pot colored bright red.

LENIN WAS A NICE GUY

LENIN WAS A GOOD-NATURED LITTLE FELLOW with a warm sense of humor. The capitalists of his day had great difficulty convincing people that he was a ruthless, cold-hearted demon. In fact, they had so much difficulty that they failed completely.

Even today they approach the business of slandering him with a kind of shame-faced apology. He's been dead for seventeen years, but they're still afraid of him. They're afraid he might jump out of his grave and start talking to the people.

When they lie about Lenin today, they whisper, and glance nervously around them. He's dead, yes. But that look in his eyes, preserved in every picture—that warm, kindly twinkle—that doesn't die. Those patient, confident eyes are haunting all Europe today.

If he was a "great" man in the pompous sense of the word, it would be easy to fight him. You could fight him and kill him and bury his smug self-importance forever. You could say what you pleased about him in the history books and nobody would ever know the difference.

But how are you going to fight a good-natured little fellow with a warm sense of humor? How are you going to lie about him? How are you going to bury him?

It's a new kind of thing, and they're afraid of it.

Many a man has traveled all the way to Moscow and visited the tomb of Lenin, just to assure himself that he's dead—and come away still unconvinced.

It's hard to call Lenin "great." It's difficult to say just what he was. Surely he had none of the impressive qualities which have become associated with the word "great."

One of the best books ever written is "Memories of Lenin"

by his wife Krupskaya. There you see the intimate, private life of Lenin—a life lived mostly in cheap furnished rooms and flats. In the winter time he carried an umbrella and wore rubbers. In summer he rode a bicycle. He lived entirely with the common people and never went near the “great.”

He wanted a decent, constructive society. He wanted to change the world and make it better. To that end, he studied and planned incessantly.

You’d think under those circumstances he would have sought out important people who had some influence or power. You’d think he’d have brought his plans to famous and distinguished men who might do something about it.

Instead, he sought out carpenters, mechanics, ditch diggers, and people like that who could hardly keep a roof over their own heads, let alone change the world and build a new society.

Lenin actually thought that these simple people, grubbing away for a bare livelihood, could change the whole pattern of society.

Imagine going to an unemployed bricklayer who didn’t know where his next meal was coming from, and saying: “I’ve got here a plan for a new and better society called socialism that I’d like to interest you in.”

It sounds ridiculous, doesn’t it? Well, by God, it turned out he was right. These people not only had the power to change society, but they actually did so in one-sixth of the world. What’s more, they were the only ones who did have the power to do it, and the only ones who would have been interested in doing so.

Furthermore, when you come to think of it, it was very logical. If you’re going to build a better world, that calls for bricklayers, carpenters, farmers, mechanics, plumbers, miners—working men. The capitalists and “important” people have no power. They make use of the power of the workers. They harness labor

power to their own purposes. Even military power is labor power—the power of labor perverted and used against itself.

Lenin had studied the works of another genial and good-natured man named Karl Marx. A man so simple and friendly that he once delayed his work because he didn't want to disturb his pet cat sleeping on his papers. Yet those papers contained the theory of scientific socialism which was destined to revolutionize the world.

Lenin knew that the ordinary men held in their hands all the power to create—to build—to change. He taught them to understand the power that was theirs. He organized them, led them, and overturned a mighty empire. As a result, the first workers' and farmers' state, embracing one-sixth of the earth's land surface, was established—the Soviet Union.

That man had a kind of magic. But his death brought no comfort to the capitalists of the world. That same confidence, wisdom and good-nature in his eyes now looks from the eyes of millions. When Lenin talked to the people, they heard a man like themselves speaking. It was almost like they were talking to themselves.

He didn't say "Believe in me." He said, "Believe in yourselves."

His confidence wasn't in what he could do. His confidence was in what the people could do if they discovered the power in their own hands, and learned confidence in themselves and each other.

THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

Senator Screwball would nearly die
If he couldn't make a speech on the Fourth of July;
If he couldn't stand up there beside Old Glory
And blow off his mouth like a damned old tory.

He delivers his speech like a bale of hay
And everyone knows what he's going to say,
For he was elected by the power trust
And is patriotic fit to bust.

When Senator Screwball rises to rave,
Thomas Jefferson rolls in his grave
And our country's flag, as it flaps and flutters,
Blushes at every word he utters.

What kind of an annual celebration
Is this for the birth of a free-born nation?
Rubber stamp stooges yelling like Neroes
To honor a revolution's heroes!

He howls for war and beats the drums
And thinks the unemployed are bums.
He voted for a free speech gag,
But God, how the Senator loves the flag!

He likes to tell about Lexington Square
And how Washington crossed the Delaware
And of Betsy Ross and the flag so dear
And the midnight ride of Paul Revere.

But if these brave names should rise to his call
He'd fingerprint them one and all.
He'd call them Reds and Trojan spies
And have them questioned by Congressman Dies.

There isn't one problem that Screwball can fix
But he loves to hold forth about '76.
In the year 1940 he's wholly content
To see how much progress he can prevent.

He speaks in the names of great builders and doers,
But won't even advocate fixing the sewers.
A fine kind of honor for heroes who bled
In order that things could be done and be said.

THE TECHNIQUE OF DEMOCRACY

CHARACTERS: A banker, a publisher, a congressman and a photographer. All on stage when curtain rises.

SCENE: Photographer's studio.

PUBLISHER: (starting to untie a large bundle) Now, Mr. Congressman, if you don't mind taking off your clothes.

CONGRESSMAN: Good heavens! You're not going to photograph me in the nude?

BANKER: That's not the idea, old man. If you're going to be elected President you're going to have to win the hearts of the people. Americans like rugged he-men—the human, outdoor, hail-fellow-well-met sort of thing—perhaps a touch of the rustic philosopher, a shade on the Will Rogers pattern.

PUBLISHER: Take off that suit. They'll never vote for you in that. You look exactly like the man they work for. I've got the proper outfit here.

CONGRESSMAN: (removing coat) Dear me! Complicated, isn't it? Well, I suppose you gentlemen know your business. (He continues to strip down to his long woolen underwear.)

BANKER: We elected the others, didn't we?

PUBLISHER: We elected them all.

BANKER: Take off your shoes.

CONGRESSMAN: Dear me! The shoes too? Oh, very well.

PUBLISHER: (unwrapping bundle and revealing heap of clothing) Here you are! A man of the forest and plain. (Lifts up a pair of high-laced hiking boots.) Zane Grey, Harold Bell Wright, Buffalo Bill! We'll make you look like something.

CONGRESSMAN: Good heavens man! You're not serious?

BANKER: (chewing end of cigar) Do you want to be President, or don't you?

CONGRESSMAN: Oh, yes, indeed!

BANKER: Then put on that outfit and don't ask so damned many questions.

PUBLISHER: Here's a leather jacket, khaki trousers, khaki shirt and an oil-stained felt hat.

CONGRESSMAN: I suppose you know what you're doing. (Starts putting on outfit.) But what's my wife going to say to all this?

PUBLISHER: She wants to be the first lady, doesn't she?

BANKER: She wants you to be President, doesn't she?

CONGRESSMAN: Dear me! I suppose you're right.

PUBLISHER: Do you like dogs?

CONGRESSMAN: Indeed no! I can't abide the animals.

BANKER: Well, from now on you like dogs. Understand?

CONGRESSMAN: But, my dear fellow, they smell.

PUBLISHER: Smell or no smell, you like dogs. If anybody asks you, just remember, you like dogs.

CONGRESSMAN: Dear me!

BANKER: There ain't nobody going to vote for you unless you like dogs. (To publisher) Ain't that right?

PUBLISHER: Not only that, but you like horses. Don't forget that.

CONGRESSMAN: (lacing the boots) My soul! Imagine having to put these on every morning!

BANKER: This will prove you're a regular guy—a man of the people. Stand over there and let's have a look at you.

CONGRESSMAN: (standing at distance and posing stiffly) My! I must look odd.

PUBLISHER: You look like hell, if you ask me. (Walks over, takes hat, rumples it, crams it down on the congressman's head. Then studies effect.) That's better.

BANKER: Have you got your pipe?

CONGRESSMAN: Oh, yes! Right here. Yes, indeed. (Procures thin, spindly little pipe from coat pocket.)

PUBLISHER: Do you expect to get enough steam up on that thing to reach the White House?

BANKER: That ain't no pipe. It's a pimp stick. Here. Stick that in your face. (Produces enormous, curved-stem college pipe.)

CONGRESSMAN: (toying with it) My goodness! What a whopper!

PUBLISHER: (shaking head) I think, Mr. Banker, you and I have been a couple of damned fools. This man looks like an idiot.

BANKER: It's too late to do anything about it now. We've picked him and he'll have to do. Besides, I don't know as I agree with you. He looks sort of homey and agreeable.

PUBLISHER: I was right in the first place. We should have picked an iron man—some guy with a jaw like a bumper. A dictator! A scowler!

BANKER: Not yet, William—not yet.

PUBLISHER: Well, we might as well go ahead. (To photographer) Are you ready?

PHOTOGRAPHER: If you'll just stand a little to the left, Mr. Congressman.

PUBLISHER: (exploding) Damn you! Damn you, I say! I'll have no more of the left.

PHOTOGRAPHER: I'm sorry, sir. I simply meant—

PUBLISHER: Damn what you meant! Stand to the right, Mr. Congressman. We'll give you your orders.

BANKER: (to photographer) You will have to move your camera to the right. Our candidate will not stand to the left.

PUBLISHER: That's better. Now on with the work. (To congressman) See if you can't look alive.

BANKER: Put your arm up this way. Take hold of the pipe. Relax a bit.

PUBLISHER: As I think of it now, we ought to have him

holding a bunch of dead ducks on a string and carrying a shotgun.

BANKER: Think what you're saying, man! Do you want to alienate the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals?

PUBLISHER: Perhaps so. Gad, but he looks silly!

BANKER: Smile, congressman, smile!

PHOTOGRAPHER: Look at the birdie!

PUBLISHER: Democracy's a nuisance.

(Photographer discharges flare.)

BANKER: Young man, you have photographed the next President.

PHOTOGRAPHER: May God have mercy on my soul.

CONGRESSMAN: (still posing stiffly) Tell me, gentlemen, when you're ready to shoot.

CURTAIN

DREISER TELLS 'EM

WELL, I MET THEODORE DREISER. It wasn't a very intimate meeting since some five or six hundred other people met him at the same time, and personal contacts on a mass scale like that are not exactly chummy. However, since he does not hesitate to bare the privacy of his mind in front of God and everybody, we all met him as satisfactorily as if we'd been sitting in his own kitchen.

As a general thing, distinguished men perform an intellectual strip tease when they address audiences. They uncover their ideas with a great deal of ceremony, give you a quick peek here and there, and lead up to the final revelation only after slowly removing one protective garment after another. Thus when the audience gets a furtive glimpse of the naked truth, it has the illusion of being rare and unusual. They forget that, after all, the parts revealed are extremely common—standard equipment, in fact, of hundreds of millions.

Dreiser comes stomping out mentally barefoot and stark naked. He says, "You want to see my mind? Hell, here it is. Have a look at it." This is kind of disturbing to people who prefer to see the truth through key-holes.

The truth is nothing new. Everybody knows the truth. But some people don't like to have it thrust in front of them. They don't like to look at it.

Everybody knows the truth, but everybody won't face it. They don't like it. So they look to great men for some "other" truth or some "better" truth. They don't like their own truth.

What's wrong with the world, they ask? They see a small wealthy class wallowing in excessive luxury. They see a few men owning all the industries and exploiting them for their personal gain. They see these men perverting democracy by the power of wealth, buying courts, buying legislators, buying newspapers, buying public officials, and ruling things to suit them-

selves without regard for anyone else. They see millions of workers unable to make ends meet in spite of the fact that their labors produce enough to satisfy the needs of all. They see millions more unemployed—denied the right to work and live. They see countless millions of oppressed people in colonial countries sweated for wages of a few cents a day while capitalists in other countries take for themselves all the wealth their labor produces. They see all these things and many more. They know all about them. Yet they ask: What's wrong with the world?

They want some other answer. They don't want the obvious answer because somehow they've got a foothold in this contemptible form of society and are enjoying some advantage from it.

Some people were disappointed and stunned by Dreiser's talk because he just told them what they knew already, whereas they came there hoping to hear some new and highly intellectual "truth" which might circumvent reality.

What Dreiser told them was that the capitalist system is lousy, that the present dirty mess would prevail until they got sense enough to establish socialism, and that they were a "pack of goddam fools" for tolerating such a state of affairs. He told them just that bluntly and in that style of language. His delivery was so artless and ordinary that people's faces were flushed and their eyes glassy. They couldn't reject the plain truth he spoke and their brains could not move rapidly enough to create evasions and excuses.

It wasn't a speech in the ordinary sense of the word. It was an important piece of American history. Here was a man who had attained the highest place of any living American writer, speaking to his people in the greatest crisis of history. It was comparable only to Charlie Chaplin, the little music hall comedian who won the affection of the whole world, facing the

people from the screen and begging them with tears in his eyes, please not to kill each other.

I only wish that Dreiser could have made that speech to a working class audience. It epitomized the raw truth which we all know and all agree on, but which we're inclined to forget in times like these. When I say "we" I mean all working people and honest intellectuals like Dreiser. I do not mean those people to whom the capitalist system is an advantage or who think it is to their advantage. Those people too recognize the truth when it is forcefully presented to them.

A few—but very few indeed—want a good world to live in more than the material advantages which capitalism affords them. These few cannot find intellectual nourishment or satisfaction in the mere gathering of wealth unto themselves or in the luxuries of yachts and racing stables and high priced booze. Those few—and I said few indeed—would like to see a good society. The rest—and that's practically all of them—create fancy lies to evade the truth. They even hire clever writers to invent lies and try to convince themselves of them.

If you'll go into any commercial book store you will find that three-fourths of the books on sale consist of elaborate efforts of the upper class to convince themselves of lies or pawn off their lies on the people. Such a process becomes vastly complicated. It is the search for some "other truth" that will place the blame for human misery on the miserable human—for cheating on the cheated—for hunger on the hungry—and the blame for mass murder on the dead who lie in their graves.

Dreiser doesn't belong to them. Dreiser belongs to us. He's the greatest living writer in America and he belongs to the working people. That makes the upper class sore as hell. Nothing makes a capitalist madder than the existence of something he can't buy with his money, confuse with his lies, or scare with his wrath.

BLESSED ARE THE POOR

IN PITTSBURGH on November 11, 12 "bums" died. Four of them were claimed by relatives. The remaining eight were buried with glorious ceremony. They were poisoned by roach powder which spilled into the hotcake batter of a Salvation Army center.

They wandered in hungry and destitute, with stinking feet and bleary eyes. Theirs was the abject humility of which Christ spoke so reverently.

I don't know how it happened, but the roach powder was kicked over or mistaken. In any case it got into the hotcakes. They were duly blessed, God was thanked for them, and the "bums" ate them—and died in agony.

I'm not blaming the Salvation Army. Accidents can happen anywhere. Neither am I praising the Salvation Army. I have yet to hear any man who was driven by hunger into their doors come out with a good word to say for them.

I understand they feed some of the poor. So be it. The poor themselves report that sufficient work is extracted from them before the hotcakes are forthcoming. I don't know. I never dropped around.

It's holy work, feeding the poor. By the same authority, it's holy to be poor. Blessed are the poor and blessed be those who scoop out beans to them. Blessed be all of us.

I've fed the poor myself, and also been fed. On neither end have I felt either holy or blessed. I have only felt shame and anger that a race of men backed up by such idealistic literature and possessed of such splendid ideals cannot share an abundant earth together in such a manner that men need not beg or wander the street in dirty socks and ragged clothes.

Life magazine published a full page picture of those eight dead "bums" lying in expensive coffins with beautiful flowers arranged at their heads. They had shirts as white as the clouds

and brand new suits. A brass band played "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

Their death was a tragedy which shocked Pittsburgh and shocked the nation. It was an accident. They were washed into eternity by a flood of righteous tears.

If men and women shall weep at such things, let them cry all day and dampen their pillows at night with emotional sorrow.

Those men are dead. Their long, hungry patrol of the midnight pavement is ended. What pain they had in heart and head has left their bodies. Their hopes are done and their discouragement is no longer an issue. The sick memories they had, the things they blamed themselves for, are gone.

Too bad the picture in "Life" was not clearer. Somewhere their faces could be identified. I might know one of them. You might know another. But a million more are wandering the skidrows of America. Their pain is still real, their discouragement agonizing, their memories inescapable.

Must they be poisoned with roach powder to constitute a tragedy? Is the pain of their poverty an accident?

Perhaps it is a kind of accident. Yes, in a certain sense it is an accident. It's an accident like the fact that you happen to be in your particular job.

Every man has the makings of a "bum" inside him. That's what scares you when they ask for dimes on the street. That's what makes you nervous and irritated. It's not the dime. It's the uncomfortable reminder that you're not secure.

At heart you're a bum. You've got a direct link, a direct identity with every bum on the skidrow. You're the stuff that bums are made of, and bums are the stuff that you're made of. You're hanging onto an economic string with a pit of poverty and loneliness beneath you, and you don't like to be reminded of it.

Let the band play and the tears flow for the eight "bums" who got the dirty end of the stick by life and then were fed roach powder. They missed the draft. They have no more rent to pay. They couldn't make the grade. The booze got them. They ran with loose women. They gambled on the horses. They played poker. They should have gone to night school. They went to the wrong night school. They weren't intelligent (like you). They weren't moral (like you). They weren't on their toes (like you).

Isn't it a pity everybody can't be wonderful like you?

Won't it be splendid when all human beings are good and worthy like you and there are no more bums?

Obviously the Communists are wrong. Your own virtue proves it. Bums are bums because they're bums. You eat regularly because of your excellent virtue. Or do you?

Yet sometimes I think if we gave everybody a square break (like the Reds advocate) we wouldn't be able to tell who was a bum and who wasn't. We'd all be people together.

And you'd probably enjoy life better too—if you weren't afraid you'd wind up a bum.

WILLY AND THE BOMBS

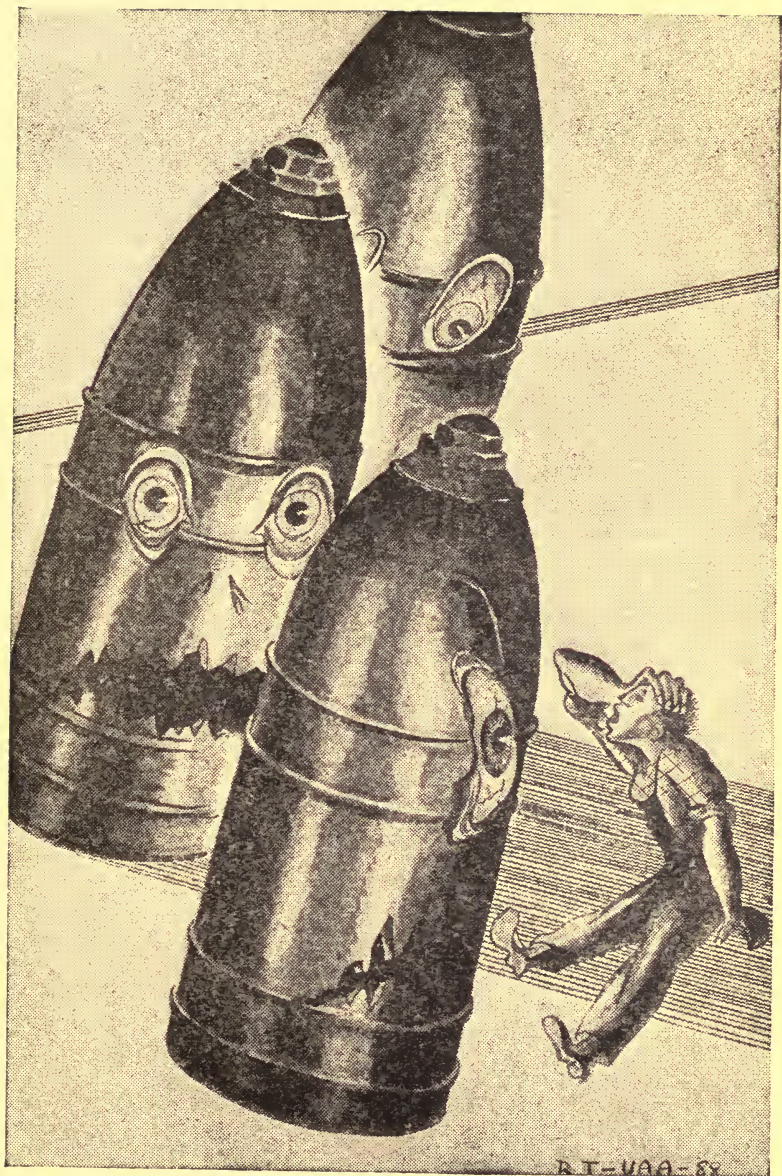
Young Willy worked at a metal trade
In the mill where bombs and shells are made
And the bombs went by on an endless chain
That drilled monotony into his brain.
And he screwed each fuse with careful eye
And checked each bomb that drifted by
'Til bombs and bombs with measured tread
Were marching squads in Willy's head.
They were smooth and round and nicely tooled
And sharp and accurately ruled.
He screwed each fuse for days and days
'Til bombs swam round him in a maze
And a sickly, dizzy blinding spell
Confused his brain, and Willy fell.

When his head came clear, to his great surprise
He discovered bombs had mouths and eyes.
They stood around, a thousand or more,
Watching him lie on the factory floor.

"Get up, you lazy bum," said one,
"There's lots of blasting to be done."
"Get up, you slug," another said,
"And screw a fuse into my head."
"Get up! Get up!" their voices yelled.
"Whole towns are waiting to be shelled."

Poor Willy gazed about the place
And passed one hand across his face,
For bombs that talk and shout of war
Were bombs he'd never seen before.
And stranger still, each bomb could say
What fiendish role its iron would play.

"I'll drop," said one, "to some hotel
"And blow the occupants to hell."
"I'll burst," another said, "on decks
"And blast the crew to mangled wrecks."
"I will," said another, "on some dark night
"Come screaming down from terrible height.
"Women will tremble, children will cry,
"As faster and faster, out of the sky,
"Louder and louder, down and down,
"I'll shriek and burst in the heart of a town,
"Ripping the earth and walls and stones,
"Strewing the wreckage with flesh and bones."



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"Another one jibbered, "I'll kill! I'll kill!
"I don't know who. But I will! I will!"
Their voices shrieked of terrible places
Mangled stumps and eyeless faces,
Dark black terror and screaming fright
And children huddled in the death-mad night,
And they laughed—they laughed insane and glad
At shell-torn flesh and brains gone mad.
And Willy crouched on the concrete floor.
"My God!" he screamed, "No more. No more."
But closer and closer they leaned and yelled
Of women and children shocked and shelled
Of the good earth torn with deafening noise
And soaked in the blood of men and boys.
"No more!" yelled Willy. "No more! No more!"
And his arms struck out at the bombs of war.

Then suddenly Willy opened his eyes.
There was the factory. There were the guys.
"Take it easy," said Bill. "You just passed out.
"What the hell is this 'no more' stuff about?"
"You yelled 'No more. No more,'" said Ed,
"And tried to clout me on the head."
"You must have had a dream," said Pete.
"Or else you're daffy with the heat."
Willy looked slowly, one to the other.
He was pale. He trembled. "Oh, Jesus, brother!
"How can I tell you? What can I do?"
"My God, if you fellows only knew!
"If you'd only see it—this plant—this war,
"You'd rise and shake your fists and roar:
"No more of this—
" 'By God no more!' "

MISTER JONES

Don't you ever get lonely, Mr. Jones—
In that dinky little office, Mr. Jones?
Why don't you come on out and air your bones?

Come down off that crummy little shelf.
If need be, make a damfool of yourself.
But don't sit cooped up in there like a gloomy bug.
Come on out just once and cut a rug.

You guys with pince-nez glasses, on the shelf,
Afraid of making asses of yourself.
What are the odds when all is said and done,
If in the end you never had no fun?

Come on out, Mr. Jones!

You ain't gonna do no foolin' around
When you are shoveled underground.
They'll just scrape your name from off that door
And nobody will remember you any more.

They'll put a little stone above your head
On which the lonely truth of you is said:
"He was Mr. Jones.
"Here are his bones.
'Now he is dead.

"He lies at last, embalmed and crated.
"Not Jones and brothers
"Or Jones and others,
"But Mr. Jones incorporated."

Don't you ever get lonely, Mr. Jones—
In your smug little office, Mr. Jones?
Why don't you come on out and air your bones?

Never getting any hugs.
Never cutting any rugs.
Scowling down from a lonely shelf,
Afraid of making a fool of yourself.

Sittin' there, sittin' there, making money,
Never doing something funny.
You may be okeh with the bank trustees,
But you're sourpuss to your employes.

BILL GREEN

The employers have nothing but praise
For William Green and his ways;
He so gladly agrees
To whatever they please—
They'll be missing him one of these days.

SUGAR

ABOUT THESE PRICES. Sugar took a flying leap at the sound of the first gun. Industrialists offered the explanation that the farmers have been taking it on the chin for a long time and are entitled to recoup in the present situation.

Farmers, my neck. I stopped for a glass of beer in a Montgomery street bar room Saturday. There was a well-dressed, well-groomed man bragging to the bartender that he'd cleaned up \$6,000 in one day by gambling in sugar stocks.

He was no farmer. He was a small-fry speculator and marveled enviously at the huge sums the big boys cleaned up.

The poor field worker slaves from daybreak to sundown and can't make enough off the crop to support his family—has to go on relief when it's all over. The little farmer is lucky if he can break even. But the Montgomery street speculator can reap a small fortune in a single day off this very same crop which he has never laid his eyes on—let alone handled.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not sensible. Certainly we're in a mess. How could it be otherwise as long as things like that are possible?

Where did that \$6,000 come from—and all the other thousands reaped by the bigger speculators? You can't grab money out of the air. That came out of somebody's hide or somebody's pocket.

This speculator—he wasn't a bad guy. If a blind man wanted to cross the street he'd be quick to grab his elbow. If you were drowning, he'd like as not strip off his coat and dive to your rescue. He looked like that kind of a guy.

That's why a lot of people will say, "Why do you try to tell me such men are villains when I know so many of them and they are really good guys?"

It's not a matter of whether they are good to their mothers

or beat their wives. It just happens that they are parasites making fortunes by neither work nor brains, but just by slick manipulation.

They are a menace as deadly as the boll weevil or the typhus germ—only they don't know it.

By the peculiar and cockeyed traditions of our society, their work is deemed respectable and meritorious. I didn't mean to say "work." It isn't work. I don't know what it is. It's just silly.

It's extraordinary how smart they think they are. They attribute everything they do and get to brains. They are the first to turn on a beggar with the old gag: "He wouldn't work if you gave him a job." Yet their own occupations are not only useless but highly damaging to all other citizens.

There they are, filching pennies out of the housewives' purses, bankrupting hard working farmers, starving agricultural workers and their families, and seizing money they are not entitled to in any way whatsoever. Yet they can't see it that way and (I have no illusions) never will see it that way.

They believe themselves to be the center of civilization. They will even tell you their manipulations are what provide people with jobs. They think that if anything is done to interfere with their activities, the whole of society will collapse in helplessness.

Clear to the end they will think this way. When they are eventually clamped down on and put out of business (as is certainly necessary if humanity is ever to achieve any peace and decency) they will regard it as the collapse of civilization.

They will turn to their intimates with the tearful story: "I am a good man. I contributed to the Community Chest. I was kind to my mother. I never did anything wrong. Now look at what they are doing to me."

THREE PER CENT OWN ALL THE WEALTH

Keep off the grass
And out of the fields,
And don't trespass.
Keep out of the buildings
And off the lawns;
You're the working class.
America is the space between the cracks
In the pavement,
And the space between the railroad ties,
And the rest of it is fenced and owned
By the top hat guys.
You can sit on a park bench,
If not too long,
But keep off the lawn:
You don't belong.
You don't own a damned thing
But muscle and brain;
You're a man without property
Out in the rain.
In those warm mansions,
Three per cent
Own all the land,
Reap all the rent.
They've got it all
And want still more.
Step up, America,
And knock on the door.
Tell them that democracy
Is about to begin;
That the joke is over
And you're moving in.

HOW TO ENTERTAIN GUESTS

MR. ARCHIBALD BLODGET was extremely fond of his own ideas and the sound of his voice. Wafting his cigar gracefully, he launched into a long-winded and uninteresting story. "Just about a week ago," he said—

"It was a month ago," interrupted his wife.

"Damn it all," said Blodget. "You don't even know what I'm talking about." Their guests, Mr. and Mrs. Gottschalk, fidgeted uncomfortably but pretended to overlook the dispute.

"You were going to tell them about your speech," said Mrs. Blodget.

"Well, suppose I was? What difference does it make—a week ago—a month ago?" Blodget fourished his cigar in annoyance.

"You were saying—" said Mr. Gottschalk, trying to put the conversation back on the track.

"Yes," said Blodget, "about—well, I was asked to say a few words to the raging tigers."

"You asked yourself," interrupted Mrs. Blodget.

"Damn it, Mary! Are you going to contradict everything I say?"

"What are the raging tigers?" asked Mrs. Gottschalk.

"It doesn't matter," said Mr. Gottschalk, trying to rescue the situation. "What were you saying, A. B.?"

"Oh, its some kind of a group," said Mrs. Blodget. "All the business men who are mad at the New Deal formed it. They sit up all hours of the night playing poker. It's not that I mind, but he needs his sleep."

Blodget was purple in the face. He sat back puffing his cigar erratically. "All right, to hell with it. It wasn't important anyway."

"No, no. I'd like to hear," said Mrs. Gottschalk.

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Gottschalk. "What were you going to say, A. B.?"

"Don't be silly, dear. We're all listening," said Mrs. Blodget.

He rallied himself somewhat weakly. "It's just that they asked—or anyway I was going to say a few words. I guess there was about five hundred people there."

"Why Archibald," said his wife. "You couldn't get five hundred people in that hall. There weren't over two hundred."

"They put extra chairs in," gasped Blodget desperately.

"Yes, but even so—"

"It doesn't matter," said Mr. Gottschalk grimly. "As you were saying, A. B."

"Maybe they enlarged the hall," said Mrs. Gottschalk, trying in her own small way to bridge the gap.

"Anyway they were there," said Blodget angrily. "They were there and I was going to make the speech."

Mr. Gottschalk tried to soothe him by feigning great interest. He leaned forward with a smile on his face so silly that it was insulting.

"I was going to make the speech," said Blodget. "I had it all written out. I had it in my pocket. I know I had it in my pocket."

"You didn't have it in your pocket," said his wife.

"I did have it in my pocket," screamed Blodget.

"You didn't have it in your pocket," said his wife. "Otherwise it would have been there."

"I did have it in my pocket," screamed Blodget. "But I don't know what happened to it."

"If you had it in your pocket it would have been there," said his wife.

"It doesn't matter," said Mr. Gottschalk.

"It does matter," roared Blodget. "I'm not going to have her sit there contradicting everything I say."

"And I'm not going to have you raising your voice to me in front of company," snapped Mrs. Blodget.

"Now, now—" said Mr. Gottschalk.

"You keep out of this," said Blodget.

"You have no right to talk to my guests that way," said Mrs. Blodget.

"Well they're my guests too, aren't they?"

"Well you wouldn't think so to hear you talk."

"If it wasn't in your pocket, then where was it—or was it?" asked Mrs. Gottschalk.

"This is the last time I'll ever ask anyone to our house," said Mrs. Blodget.

"You didn't ask them," said Blodget. "I did.

"You did nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Blodget.

"If you'd rather we'd go," suggested Mr. Gottschalk.

"I should say not," said Blodget. "I invited you here and I am going to entertain you. Sit down."

"You did not," snapped Mrs. Blodget. "I invited them and they're perfectly welcome."

You can finish this story yourself.

THE INSIDIOUS 'ISM

MY WIFE BROUGHT ME HOME a copy of the magazine SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY. I opened it up, read one sentence, and burst out laughing.

"What's so funny about it?" she asked.

"Listen to this," I said, and read the following:

"At the third plenum of the Soviet Committee of the International League Against Rheumatism, the reports—"

At that, she burst out laughing too. We both had a good laugh, then quieted down suddenly. Almost simultaneously, we realized this wasn't funny.

I remembered my grandmother showing me the swollen knuckles of her hands and telling me the rheumatism had got them so badly she didn't know what to do. I remembered a score of incidents where rheumatism had brought pain and tragedy to the lives of friends and neighbors.

We are so accustomed in this country to leagues against socialism, communism and so-called foreign "isms," that the idea of a League Against Rheumatism is apt to strike us funny. Yet what is more logical for a workers' society? The thing is so sensible and practical it is stunning.

It is to be recognized that in America we have numerous societies and movements combatting disease, including the President's "March of Dimes." Considerable headway has been made, although most medical men will admit the hardships of depression and unemployment are creating more disease in a day than they could cure in a month. What we have never attempted in this country is socialized medicine. And that is exactly what they are pioneering in Russia.

American newspapers and periodicals have directed considerable ridicule and scorn against socialized medicine. Honest disagreement is possible on any question but why ridicule and

scorn? The goal of socialized medicine is plainly a fine one. It is to improve the health of the entire population and make adequate care available to all. This obviously cannot be done by merely increasing the number of doctors and hospitals or making surgeons remove appendixes on a giant belt-line.

The hope of socialized medicine lies in the preventive field. It is related to architecture through the need for well lighted and ventilated housing. It is related to industry through the need for safety and health precautions. It is related to economics because of the affect of insecurity and worry upon human health.

Still more important is to assure that persons will come to the doctor before their ailments have reached an advanced age. Today in America, the burden of doctor bills is so fearful, the average worker does not seek medical aid until he is literally driven to it by pain.

Socialized medicine is a monumental task. Certainly you would suppose the Soviet Union merited the respect and gratitude of the entire world for pioneering it. Surely every sincere person must cheer the effort and hope for its success. It has never been attempted anywhere else.

Instead, however, we find the American press generally sneering and ridiculing—desperately striving to propound arguments against it and theories to justify prediction of failure. I don't want to exaggerate that. The advances of Soviet medicine have been so extraordinary that they could not be ignored, and many fine articles and acknowledgments have appeared in magazines and papers. On the whole, however, these have been reluctant and overshadowed by scorn and ridicule. Why?

Mainly it is because socialized medicine is related to socialized industry which the private industrialists of America are determined to convince us will not work and, furthermore, is evil and wicked. To this end they depict the Soviet Union as a

brutal dictatorship. Naturally the remarkable achievements of socialized medicine, the construction of thousands upon thousands of schools, hospitals, nurseries and libraries all over Russia, and the incredible gains in production and public welfare are extremely embarrassing to such a theory. You will note how the continual collapse of Russia has been reported in American papers for the past 21 years.

This is identically the same kind of scorn and ridicule and refusal to understand which was directed against the young American Republic after the revolution of 1776. America was the laughing stock of the courts of Europe for generations. When the Civil War broke out, Europe's aristocracies went wild with joy. We were "rubes" and "yokels." The word "Yank" during America's early struggles had identically the same meaning in Europe as the word "Red" has in the capitalist nations today.

Certainly the Soviets kicked the capitalists out of their plushy offices and placed workers' committees in charge of the industries. They did this no less gently than we kicked the behinds of the British aristocrats to the tune of Yankee Doodle.

Was it right? Was it a good idea?

History isn't an idea. It moves relentlessly on the needs of the people. There is not the slightest question that here in America our capitalists command the finest industries, the most abundant resources and the best skilled labor on earth. They're making a hell of a mess of it, and that's not controversial.

I think American workers are perfectly capable of electing committees out of their own ranks that could run those industries excellently—on a socialized basis of course.

BUMS

Stew-bums and stumble-bums,
That's us.
Dirty clothes, yellow teeth
And our feet smell.
We're bums.
With our bloodshot eyes and our goofy gab,
It scares you to have us walking around
Because you're afraid we might
Knock you over the dome
And take some of your nickels.
We once thought one thing and another
And did this or that.
But now we don't give a damn.
We like booze.
The millionaire takes it
In the big hotels
With a dame in his lap.
We take a pint of muscatel
Behind a billboard
And use our imagination.
You explain it.
You've got all the answers.
We just don't fit the picture.
Help yourself to an answer, brother.
Pick yourself an easy one
And shove it up your ego.
If you just figure we're no good,
And a bum is just naturally
What he adds up to;
And if you like that definition,
You just wrap it up and take it home.
Maybe there's an answer—
There must be an answer—

And maybe someday somebody'll make it.
But we don't care what it is
Or whether he makes it or not,
Because we stopped caring.
Maybe the booze did it
And maybe you did it.
Maybe we did it ourselves.
Maybe the same thing made bums of us
That made a damn fool of you.
Somehow it happened.
Somewhere along the line
The wind blew too cold,
The street was too lonely
And we hungered too long.
Our blood got crazy
And our brains all fuddled
From the pictures of pretty ladies
On magazine covers and billboards.
Flop-houses, hand-outs and garbage cans,
And all the pretty girls
Grinning at you from magazines.
Somewhere along the line it happened,
And now we don't give a damn.
Take your pity and shove it,
Your hatred and shove it,
And the same with your analysis.
We're just scrambled dreams
And goofy gab
And smelly feet.
That's all that's left of us.
You have to kill all of a man
Before they call it murder.

THE LOCOMOTIVE

THIS IS AN ERA of political jitters. When the proverbial locomotive of history turns corners, some fall off, while others momentarily lose their balance or fall into the aisles—especially those passengers who were dozing at the time.

When the train runs into a tunnel they scream "All is lost" and suppose that the tunnel runs straight into the ground through eternal darkness. Every bump of the rails terrifies them with the vision of disaster.

They have little confidence in either the train or the crew or the tracks or the destination or themselves or anyone else. It is on the smooth level stretches that they pick themselves up, resume their seats, and lounge back to complain that the train doesn't go fast enough, the engineers don't know their business, and the whistle needs tuning. They pass their time in long discussion as to whether the train is even on the right track or not.

"Give us something to believe in!" is their cry.

A little man with a pointed beard once replied to them: "All confidence in the masses." By that he meant confidence in each other and themselves and particularly in the working class.

He didn't say it in the sense of waiting for miracles. Only the hopeless ask for miracles. He made it clear that out of the struggles of the working people a strong, sane peaceful society would arise. Confidence in that struggle and participation in that struggle was his answer.

He warned against trusting the intellectual liberals who dabbled in the struggle less in the attitude of brotherhood and common cause than in the idealistic belief that their better brains and more sensitive souls would guide the "poor dumb working folk." Such persons, he warned, laid all faith in their liberal strategies and none in the masses.

It would be a crude distortion of that wisdom to propose that all liberals go crazy in a crisis. It would be equally fanatical to propose that no workingmen go tumbling off the locomotive or sprawling in the aisles when the corners are turned. There's nothing absolute about such a principle.

It simply means that the working people are no fair maidens locked in a tower. No liberal knight on horseback is going to rescue them. When their chains are broken, they'll break them, and when a decent society is built, they'll build it. And to that end they must have all confidence in themselves and each other.

The hand of brotherhood and fellowship remains always extended to those liberals who do have confidence in the masses and who recognize the limitations of their role.

Scorn for those who fall off the locomotive is a waste of time. They fall off and sit there rubbing salve on their bruises and that's that.

There are those who deplore that the cause of the working people does not move forward with the smooth and tasteful efficiency of a super-corporation. They deplore the differential of five mistakes to one achievement which sometimes characterizes the advance of the workers' cause. They have little inclination to get in there and pitch hay and try to reduce it to four to two, then three to three, then two to four, and finally to a perfect score.

Their own motto might well be, "He cannot fail who does not endeavor," and by doing nothing they avoid all mistakes.

At the present time the locomotive has not only turned a sharp corner but is traversing a deep forest in which panic, discouragement, despair, anxiety, fear, uncertainty, doubt, and confusion lurk on every hand. The great historical changes are no longer a matter of speculation and conversation. They're arriving in full reality.

It's going to be tough on those who have nothing to believe

in—nothing in which to place confidence. There stands the working man in overalls. He's taken a terrible beating time and again. He's been fooled, betrayed, sold out, duped and cheated for centuries. He's made mistakes enough to make the liberals gasp—digested his mistakes and gone right on plugging. You'll believe in him and have confidence in him or you'll lump it. He has all the strength and all the patience. His hands built everything in civilization and built it well. Now he has the final job of building socialism. He'll build it well and it will work fine. The things built by labor are the only things that do work properly in this world.

So hang on to your seats, friends. There are curves ahead.

IF ALL THE WORKERS

If all the wages were one wage,
What a huge wage that would be!
And if all the factories were one factory,
What a giant factory that would be!
And if all the owners were one owner,
What a useless snob he would be!
And if all the workers were one worker,
What a great worker that would be!
And if the great worker
Let the useless snob
Close the giant factory
And cut his giant wage,
What a damned fool he would be!

WE KNOW ENOUGH

I do not know what statesmen talk about
In all those private parleys in and out
The shining doors beyond which none may spy
In London, Berlin, New York and Shanghai.
But this I know, those statesmen, short and tall,
Thin, fat, or bald or bushy—one and all—
Are up to some shrewd devilment, and they
Are crooked as the road to Mandalay.

I do not know the schemes which financiers
Sit pouring in and out each other's ears,
Or what cruel noisy future they may be
Designing for the likes of you and me.
But this I know, their records have been such
As common men do not admire much,
And I would never trust a financier
As far as I could blow the foam off beer.

I may not know precisely what it's for,
But I do know they sit there planning war.
And though I doubt the sense of their crusade,
I do not doubt there's money to be made.
In this dark hour, Brother, let's review
The things we do not know and those we do.
We cannot trace each rumbling of the drums,
But this we know: the financiers are bums.

Ah, here, betwixt depression and a war
Sit you and me unsatisfied and sore.
Tradition says that both of us are chumps,
All history is the kicking of our rumps.
A war! A high ideal! The bugles blow!

The band strikes up a march and off we go.
'Tis nature, they explain, that makes us willing
Thus lightly to embark on wholesale killing.

I wonder if those statesmen, one and all,
Are not a pack of damn fools after all?
For, Brother, there's a new word going round
That says our bones shall stay above the ground.
And, Brother, it is even being said
That you and I shall live to die in bed.
A word of hope that has not reached the ears
Of mighty diplomats and financiers.

We're taking learned volumes off the shelves
And learning about governing ourselves,
And talking over what we know and don't
And all the things we're apt to do and won't;
And that new word of hope is sounding shrill—
Forging a solid democratic will,
Sounding above the ranting and the drumming,
Warning them all: The Yanks will not be coming.

J. HIRAM SWIVELBOTTOM

J. Hiram Swivelbottom owns
Five large, enormous plants.
He has a wardrobe that contains
Five hundred pairs of pants.

HOW TO MAKE A FORTUNE

I WENT THROUGH the "fitting in" process in pre-depression days. It wasn't so hard to find a job then, but the jobs were no good.

I got my first lesson in employer-employee relations at the age of twelve, as an errand boy in a drug store. That was during the war. Our family was poor as dirt and every nickel my brother or I could bring in after school helped.

The owner of the drug store was a big, fat sissified guy who liked to gossip with the housewives who came in and out. He paid me 10 cents an errand. There were seldom more than two errands a night to run, so my pay ran around 20 or 30 cents a night.

Then came the influenza epidemic. Things picked up in a hurry. One night I was on the run continuously as fast as my legs could carry me, adding up another dime in my brain every time I rang a doorbell. Most of our family were flat on their backs at home and the money was needed. I fairly ran in order to make more deliveries and more dimes.

At the end of the evening when it was time to pay me off, that big, effeminate fatty handed me 30 cents. It was a blow I'll never forget. My heart pounded blood up into my head. He informed me that the 10 cents an errand rate only applied on slow evenings, and that otherwise the pay was a straight 10 cents an hour. Of course, there had never been any such understanding.

The more I argued with him the more he scolded me for being disrespectful to my elders and reminded me I should be glad to have a job, that there were plenty of other boys in the neighborhood who would be willing to work for 25 cents an evening.

In my helplessness and desperation I did the only thing I

could think of, that was to call him the few dirty names I had learned at that age. I suppose you could call that the start of my journalistic career. He kicked me out and I went home crying.

My grandmother at that time was my Labor Relations Board—a magnificent and powerful woman who struck fear in the hearts of bill collectors. Many a time I have seen her chase them down the stairs, beating them over the head with a broom. As a girl she was a volunteer worker for the Knights of Labor, and quickly recognized the far-reaching significance of my dispute.

She put her hat on, went down to the corner, and did a thing that she called “giving him a piece of her mind.” It was a boundless brain she had and when she hurled substantial chunks of it into a fellow human’s intellect, the splash was terrific. It accomplished little more than to scare the daylights out of him, but that was all she expected. She knew you could only tackle these things by organization. As a final blow she announced the withdrawal of our family trade from his concern.

That worried him little, however. She concocted her own medicines in the kitchen and even made her own soap in great steaming, stinking vats—purer and cheaper, she called it. Furthermore, we were head over heels in debt to all the local merchants and our patronage was something of an anguish.

The search for my first full time job was a great adventure. I put on my Sunday suit and took a lunch under my arm. My grandmother’s advice was to “put my best foot forward.” It didn’t make much difference what kind of a job I got just so there was a “chance of advancement.” Everything was on the upgrade in those days. Industry was making money hand over fist.

Having a disposition for thoroughness, I selected the city’s main business street and started at the extreme end. I went

down one side of it, in and out every establishment that had a ground floor entrance.

My idea was that if that failed, I would go over it again, covering all the upper floors. I would just walk in and ask the first man I saw if they needed a boy.

It took me all morning to cover one side of the street. I ate my lunch and started up the other side. Along about five o'clock I was dog tired and the little bug of discouragement was beginning to eat at my insides. Finally I wandered into a big wholesale hosiery house and the first man I approached said, "Yes, we need a boy," and they hired me. But not before they cross-examined me to make sure I wasn't one of those undependable boys who would quit after a few months. They wanted a boy who would stay there and work up in the business.

"Do you think you would be interested in the hosiery business?" asked the manager.

I assured him I was. It was a lie.

He painted me a picture of endless years of hard work and service in the hosiery game that would finally land me a managerial post. My head reeled with sickness at the very thought of it. The shelves of socks and stockings extended to the ceiling and were heaped about in towering mounds of white boxes. The clerks wove in and out among them furtively. They didn't speak to each other and only occasionally shot a covert glance in my direction.

"Yes," I lied. "I will devote my life to these white boxes in this dull dusty storehouse. I will always be punctual. I will keep my mind on business. I will not watch the clock. And I will always try to do just a little more work than I am paid for."

That last, he assured me, was the secret to success.

God how I lied!

The manager himself was old, bald-headed, dried up, and apparently had no other knowledge or interest than the contents

and sales points of the various boxes of hosiery. He was obviously suffering numerous minor infirmities brought on by a lifetime of devotion to hosiery.

The proposition was that I should take this magnificent thing called "life," which my parents had given to me, and spend it all inside a wholesale hosiery house with the object of stepping into the shoes of the manager. One look at his shoes convinced me I'd have to become flat-footed in order to fill them. If there was anything in the world I had no desire to become, it was a man like him. Yet this was adjudged a "splendid opportunity."

So I lied and said I was most anxious to spend my life in this manner.

Now it wasn't the work I objected to. I didn't mind work. But why make such a blooming fetish of it? I was perfectly willing to dust their shelves and run their errands. But that wasn't enough for them. They wanted a verbal guarantee of lifelong devotion to the hosiery business.

The next morning I arrived early and found all the clerks assembled in the doorway waiting for the manager to arrive and unlock the door. The main subject of conversation was what a heel and an old goat the manager was, and what a fool any man was to spend his life in this business.

When the manager hove in sight they all shut up abruptly. There was a lot of "good morning, good morning, good morning" and the door was opened.

My first assignment was to take a long feather duster, climb up a ladder, and dust off the shelves of hosiery boxes. That was easy enough, but very monotonous. Finally I got curious about what was in the boxes and began opening them. That was like a rainbow suddenly spanning a dull and uninteresting sky. Socks of every imaginable color and pattern, all neatly tucked in paper bands, appeared under every lid. One box led to another and

pretty soon the dusting was going very slowly. One pair of socks appeared to me very mightily. I was examining them covetously when a voice roared up from the floor

"Never mind what's in those boxes, young man," said the voice.

With a great show of diligence, I went on with my dusting. But I kept thinking: what was the idea of anybody roaring at me, and why did I jump that way, and what was the harm of looking in the boxes? What if I should spend my life in this place and finally become manager? What of it? I never at any time ever wanted to be the manager of any kind of a company—let alone hosiery.

Finally I developed a technique where I could dust kind of automatically with my mind free to think about whatever it pleased. So it wandered all over the earth. And all the while I knew that this was the kind of thing the manager disapproved of and I was exactly the kind of employe he was trying to avoid when he cross-examined me, and that the only way I'd ever get on in business was to lie and pretend.

When twelve o'clock came he told me I could have a half hour for lunch. That half hour of freedom seemed so good that I never went back. I could picture him saying to himself: "There you are! You never can tell about a young man. I gave him a fine opportunity and he turned out to be no good."

That didn't worry me so much. But what would I tell my family? They had been so proud to have me get a job. All afternoon I went from door to door and place to place and finally I met with success.

That night I returned home proudly. "How did the first day go?" they asked.

"Oh that?" I said. "I quit. I've got me a new job now."

"And what is that?" they asked.

"Running a pool room," I said, and my grandmother almost swallowed her false teeth.

LADIES AND LUGS

I was just sitting on a stool
Drinking a beer,
And a nice looking lady came in
With a little boy by the hand,
And she wanted her husband.
But he hadn't been around,
Said the bartender,
And he was so polite
And innocent about it,
You knew damned well he was lying.
Even when he opened up the backroom
And let her look for herself,
She was unconvinced
And unhappy.
When she left,
The bartender said
The guy'd had a hell of a can on
For over a week.
Then in came a frowzy looking girl
With no hat,
And dirty clothes,
And rings under her eyes,
And a crazy, dopey look.
"Where can I find a cop?"
She said.
"I'm sick and I want to go to a hospital."
The bartender sent her to the corner,
And they decided she must have been
On a hell of a bat.
"But no,"
One of the men said,
"She don't want no hospital,

"She just wants to turn herself in."
And they made a joke about that.
So I turned to my newspaper
To read,
And they were advertising a movie
About a girl, a guy and a gob.
"It's rough and rowdy and romantic,"
They said.
"Meet the sweetie of the fleet
"Who drove the Navy nutty!"
And the burlesque show advertised:
"Girls! Girls! Girls!"
And the cigarette company advertised
A beautiful fleshy blonde
In red, white and blue tights.
And I thought of all the poor guys
Hungry for dames;
And all the poor dames
Who need and want men,
And how they can't get together
Because they can't afford it,
Or can't run the risk,
Financially or otherwise.
And of all the other people afraid of babies,
Economically and otherwise.
And of all the dames shaking their stuff
On stage and screen,
Not because they want to shake anything,
But just because they need the dough.
And all the men and women
Driving each other crazy,

And chasing after each other
And running away from each other,
And blaming this
And blaming that
And blaming the other thing.
And when Sue Barry asked me to write
Something for the women's page
About International Woman's Day
From the man's point of view,
I just sat and sat,
And couldn't get these things out of my mind
For long enough to think of something
Appropriate!
And no matter what I thought of,
These things kept interfering
And mocking me.
And they seemed somehow pertinent.
So I thought I'd just tell you about them,
And recommend socialism,
And see what you thought.

THE ALIEN BOMBALIAN

"WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY open a window?" Judge Bolix complained. "This place smells." He removed his pince-nez glasses very delicately, massaged the lenses with a handkerchief, then mopped his large, floppy face.

The assembled officials, viewed through a haze of tobacco smoke looked like sick fish floating in a dirty aquarium.

"There is room for only one ism in Bombalia," shouted Congressman Pies, "and that is Bombalianism."

Judge Bolix blinked his eyes wearily. "My dear congressman, you have said that 40 times. Now get to the point. What evidence have you that this man Harry Britches should be deported from Bombalia?"

"He is an American," declared Pies.

"He is an agent of the Red, White and Blue network," added Senator Snimp.

"He's a disseminator of Americanistic and un-Bombalian propaganda," said Congressman Corncake.

Judge Bolix raised both hands in supplication. "Gentlemen, we are not at war with America. Just what is this so-called Americanism that seems to frighten you?"

Congressman Pies stepped dramatically forward and thumped a bundle of newspapers on the judge's desk. "Your honor, the record speaks for itself."

"What's this? What's this?" The Judge fixed his glasses on his nose.

"These, your honor," said Pies, "are American newspapers. May I call your attention to this headline, SEX MANIAC SLAYS SIX; and this one, SHOOTS TWELVE, KILLS SELF; and this one, MAD HATCHET FIEND CHOPS MOTHER."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Judge Bolix; "what riotous butchery!"



"If I might further enlighten your honor," added Congressman Corncake, "although America is the wealthiest nation on the earth, producing enough food and products to provide abundantly for many times her population, no less than 11,000,000 of her people are unemployed and destitute. Fully 23,000,000 men and women and children are dependent on an extremely stingy system of relief. Conditions of poverty in her rural regions are a disgrace to humanity. Throughout her entire history she has stumbled from one horrible depression to another and is still wallowing in one that has lasted more than nine years."

"Would you like to see a crazy and impractical system like that imposed on Bombalia?" snapped Senator Snimp.

"In case your honor still has any doubts," continued Congressman Pies, "will you please examine this copy of the Atherton report on vice graft in San Francisco? And will you also give attention to these reports of a similar expose in Los Angeles?"

"My land sakes alive!" exclaimed Judge Bolix; "I never saw so many almost completely undressed women in my life."

Congressman Pies peered over the desk. "Ah, yes," he remarked. "That's the Hearst Call-Bulletin you are looking at."

"This is extraordinary—extraordinary," said the judge. "Why on earth does this man Britches want to advocate such insanity?"

"May I have a word, your honor?" It was a voice from the back of the room. "I am Congressman Jones. I represent the opposite view in this matter. I want to point out that the man Harry Britches who is being slandered in this hearing has never advocated vice, graft, unemployment or depressions. To the contrary, his whole-hearted efforts have been toward correcting these evils which we have in Bombalia as prevalently as in America and elsewhere. The real reason and the only reason why certain people want to deport this man is because he or-

ganized the harbor workers into a union and was instrumental in winning them higher wages and shorter hours."

"Treason," cried Senator Snimp.

"Harry Britches is an Americanistic, un-Bombalian agitator," shouted Congressman Pies. "He is an agent of the Red, White and Blue conspiracy."

"Your honor," declared Congressman Corncake. "I appeal to your ideals of Bombalianism. Bombalia has always been a free country—a land where the employer has been free to exploit labor—where factory owners and financiers have enjoyed the freedom and liberty to suppress anything that interferes with their profits. Are we going to sacrifice this freedom for an Americanistic foreigner? When our own Bombalian workers organize unions we arrest them for blocking traffic or else club them senseless. Why should we let a foreigner do what we will not let our own citizens do?"

"Preserve the freedom of employers to exploit labor and you will encourage industry," said Pies.

Judge Bolix pawed wearily at his perspiring jowls. "Why doesn't somebody open a window?" he complained. "This place smells."

ON BLACK EYES

"TURN YOUR MUG AROUND and let's see it," said Mr. Murphy.

Mr. O'Brien, slowly and semi-shamefully exposed his face to a quick glance, then jerked it back into concealment.

"Some shiner! Who gave it to you?"

"You should see him," said O'Brien. "They tell me I fractured his jaw."

"Who?"

"Danny Malone. I've been aching to take a smack at him for years."

"So now you're satisfied. Turn 'round here. Can you see out of it at all?"

"'Tis nothing," said O'Brien, nursing a great mound of black and purple in which the eye was entirely obscured.

"You're sure he didn't kick you in the face?"

"I was not down, Murphy," said O'Brien indignantly. "I was not down once. You should see Malone. His teeth were all over the floor. I hit him once, then I hit him again, then I gave him low ones into the body. Crack! went something. It was either his watch or a rib. Then my foot got stuck in a spittoon."

"Just the same, you look like hell."

"'Twas my foot in the spittoon, Murphy. I looked to see who had me by the leg. Then Malone hit me slightly."

"Slightly was it? 'Tis a good thing it wasn't hard or he'd knocked the head off your neck."

"I've been wanting to smack him for years. I'll show that son of a b——. I'll show him."

"I thought you just showed him."

"Well, I did show him. But my foot got caught in the spittoon."

"Aye! 'Tis strange savagery," mused Murphy.

"Oh indeed! And what was that you and Donovan were

doing at the picnic when you lambasted each other 'til the devil himself couldn't tell who won or lost?"

"I'm a savage myself, O'Brien. But a savage can reflect upon his own savagery and be amazed. 'Tis thus that civilization moves forward."

"Leave me alone, Murphy. 'Tis my black eye, not yours, and you've no right to philosophize on it."

"Just the same, O'Brien, if humanity could grasp the philosophy of a black eye, how few our troubles would be."

"Aye, and if humanity would stop getting its foot caught in spittoons there'd be less black eyes."

"'Tis not the spittoon that's at fault, O'Brien. What is it that makes men want to hit other people in the face with their knuckles, knock their teeth out, black their eyes, hurt them and beat them to the floor?"

"'Tis a way of settling arguments and showing who is the better man."

"I know a little man, O'Brien, who loses all fights. Yet he has a way of giving the winner a devil of a lot of trouble and usually sends him home with so many cuts, bruises and broken bones that the victory is a very sour and painful one."

"Aye! There's little to it but the satisfaction."

"And the satisfaction is nothing. 'Tis like two men lying in hospital beds congratulating themselves on the injuries of each other."

"I don't always understand what you're talking about, Murphy."

"When we get mad at a man, the desire rises in us to hurt his flesh and bones and humiliate him with defeat. And as he lies there on the floor all bloody and battered, we expect to be cheered and patted on the back, for we imagine it shows we are right and the licked man is unworthy. And there's no sense in it, O'Brien."

"Not if you get your foot caught in a spittoon."

"Irregardless of spittoons, O'Brien. Take war for instance, with all its airplanes and cannon. 'Tis nothing but a means of hurting another man's flesh and bones, tearing his skin, making him bleed, and killing him if possible."

"'Tis not the same, Murphy. In a war, the men are not mad at each other. They don't even know each other. 'Tis a matter of principles and courage and showing they are not afraid."

"True indeed, O'Brien. There is more sense in a bar room brawl than in a war. And there's more civilization too. When a man gets mad at another and is overcome with the crazy urge to knock his teeth out, he is responding to an ancient instinct. With the savages it was an urge to kill. We've got over that mostly. You didn't want to kill Danny Malone, for instance."

"God forbid, Murphy! I had no such idea."

"You just wanted to knock his teeth out."

"By heaven, Murphy, you have a way of making a thing sound foolish. I just wanted to take a smack at him, that's all."

"'Tis strange savagery, but less strange than war."

"I wonder, Murphy, if there's ever any sense in taking a smack at anyone?"

"Aye! There is, O'Brien. But not for a bar room brawl, and not for a crazy war. The world is badly messed up right now and the working people want to straighten it out and live good-naturedly. But it looks like they're going to have to give something an awful smack in the puss before they can do it."

"A sort of a last smack, so to speak."

"A last smack, O'Brien, and heaven help those who have their feet caught in spittoons."

GOING DOWN

HE WAS A LITTLE GUY with nice but kind of meek eyes—getting along in years.

Stopping an elevator is an easy job and he'd have done it very well if he hadn't been so nervous and anxious to make good. You could fly an airplane with less concentration and effort than he put into running that elevator.

As it was he pursed his lips tightly, fixed his eyes desperately on the passing floors, and worked the lever by nervous jerks instead of with an easy, relaxed motion. As a result, the first stop would be two feet below the floor. A series of quick jerks would bounce it up somewhere near the mark. Another jerk would overshoot it a couple of inches. Another would drop it an inch too low.

He would open the gate with an apologetic, "Step up, please," that carried a note of fear.

You see the head man was standing right in back of him, breaking him in and trying him out. He smiled indulgently at the passengers in unspoken apology for the clumsiness of his pupil.

By heaven, that little old fellow wanted that job. He wasn't born to wear a uniform, and the snappy military-style cap fitted too far down on his head, resting on his ears which were too large. The rest of his uniform was yet to come. He still had on the baggy black civilian suit that bore unmistakable signs of long unemployment.

If he only didn't try so hard. If he only didn't care so much. If he'd only take it easy. Stopping an elevator isn't hard if you don't take it too seriously. Come to think of it, nothing is terribly hard if you don't take it too seriously.

Later that afternoon the head man left him to his own devices. Removal of the watching eye brought some improvement

—but not a great deal. Still he labored and sweated, jerked and bounced, apologized with a desperate, “Please step up,” or “Please step down.”

When you’re getting to be an old man and you’re all washed up in other lines, an elevator job is something to go for. It’s a chance to finish life in a little furnished room with tobacco in your pouch and money to go to the movies.

He was anxious to please—happy to have you speak to him, and always ready with a polite and friendly reply, even though a bit nervous.

The next day he was still at it, putting more work into that little lever than all the rest of the office building put together. Some of the fellows kidded him a little and asked him if he’d leave them off within a few feet of such and such a floor, but there was nothing mean about it. He always smiled right back and said, “Oh, I’ll get it. It just takes a little practice, that’s all. I’ll get it.”

I think we were all rooting for him in our hearts—nice little guy with sad eyes. We didn’t care if we had to climb up to get out of the elevator, just so he got the job.

Late that night all the operators had gone home. The head man—the hirer and firer—was running one elevator just to pick up the late tenants. He glided the lever by second nature with easy graceful motions, always made it in one try.

On the fifth floor he stopped and took a couple of big shots in. Big men, well-dressed, well-fed—important tenants. They fairly radiated confidence and well-being. They’d evidently had a prosperous day because the rich, self-assured laughter was rolling from them as they puffed their cigars.

“Where’s old man jitter fingers?” asked one as he stepped in.

“Say,” said the other. “I get a kick out of that old guy.”

Where the hell did you pick him up? Kristalmighty, I got yet to see him stop within six feet."

They fairly roared with laughter.

"Yeah, he's kinda old," said the head man apologetically.

"By God, the other morning I thought it was going to take all day to get off at our floor. I damned near lost my dentures bouncing up and down." Again the laughter boiled out of them.

"Cheeses what a gloomy looking Gus. Where did you pick him up? He looks like he's about to be hung."

My heart went cold in me. I felt sick. They were building the scaffold, tying the noose and digging the grave, all in the name of comedy. The desperate effort and frantic hope of an old man was being crushed for a moment's entertainment.

All that evening the sad and friendly eyes of that anxious little man filled my thoughts and the memory of confident, self-satisfied laughter echoed in my ears.

I SAW A RAT

I saw a fat

Greedy rat

Wearing the hat

Of a plutocrat.

Fat, rat, hat,

Plutocrat.

Imagine that!

ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

"THIS LOOKS LIKE as good a place as any to sit down," said Mr. Murphy.

A sign tacked to the tree read: "Private property of Mr. Blodget. Trespassers will be prosecuted."

Mr. Murphy eased the load from his shoulders and sprawled comfortably on the earth.

"But the sign," said Mr. O'Brien. "'Tis against the law."

"The law," said Mr. Murphy, "concerns the intellect. 'Tis something man conceived of in his brain and has no relation to nature. I am resting my feet and the seat of my pants. Not my head. Those parts of a man operate by the laws of nature, which need no writing on signs."

"Just the same, the law has feet, too, Murphy, and can use them to kick you in the pants regardless of philosophy." Reluctantly, he put down his load and stretched out on the sod.

"Ah, the feet feel grand to be off them," said Murphy, removing his shoes. Across the road was another sign on another tree: "Private property of Mr. Schniff. Trespassers will be prosecuted."

O'Brien picked up a clod of dirt. "'Tis a beautiful world, Murphy. And isn't it odd, when you come right down to it, 'tis nothing but a big hunk of dirt." He squeezed the clod and it crumbled through his fingers.

"Dirt ye be to dirt returneth," said Murphy.

"What are you talking about?" said O'Brien.

"'Tis a biblical phrase, I believe. Something about man being a hunk of dirt. Out of the dirt he comes and back into it he goes, and that's life."

"Yes," said O'Brien, "everything's dirt, more or less."

"Even my feet are dirty," said Murphy.

O'Brien picked up another clod. "And this piece of dirt belongs to Mr. Blodget," he mused.

"Let me see it," said Murphy. He took the clod and studied

it. "How could he prove it, I wonder? His name is nowhere on it." He heaved the clod at the sign across the road. It broke and fell to the ground.

"Now it belongs to Mr. Schniff," said O'Brien.

"Aye," said Mr. Murphy. "And some day he'll be buried in it."

"You get to talking about dirt," said Mr. O'Brien, "and pretty soon nothing makes sense. What are the nations, Murphy, but big pieces of dirt?"

"And you get to fighting about dirt," said Murphy, "and there you have a war."

"People fighting over dirt and throwing dirt at each other," said O'Brien.

"The same dirt they came out of and go back into. Dirt they are and dirt they fling, and that, I suppose, is civilization."

"A man could go crazy if he thought enough about it."

"I sometimes think, O'Brien, the world is so crazy now, there's no place to go but sane."

"What would a sane man do in a crazy world, Murphy? They'd lock him up and say he was crazy."

"'Tis not the dirt that's wrong, but the dirt grabbers."

"Suppose," said Mr. O'Brien, "you took a spoonful of Germany and a spoonful of France and a spoonful of England and mixed them all up. What would you have?"

"Dirt," said Mr. Murphy.

"'Twas here before we came, and 'twill remain when we're gone. So what's the use of fighting over it and rubbing each other's noses in it? There's dirt for all and dirt to spare."

"We're wallowing in it, O'Brien, when we could just as well grow a garden and enjoy life while we're here."

"Aye, but where the devil are you going to grow your garden when there's scarce a place you can sit your behind without violating the law? This piece belongs to Mr. Blodget and that

other piece over there belongs to Mr. Schniff. And you and I, Murphy—we have no dirt but the dirt we are.”

“The dirt is all claimed and possessed, O’Brien with a sign on each and every piece and no doubt a mortgage to boot. The only way one man can get any dirt is to take it away from another.”

“Then when he gets it, Murphy, that’s the end of his peace of mind because everyone else is naturally trying to take it away from him.”

“That’s a terrible thought, O’Brien. A big piece of dirt whirling through eternity, inhabited by dirty people, fighting over dirt and throwing dirt at each other, and stealing dirt from each other.”

“And when it rains, they make mud pies,” said O’Brien.

“Some day, O’Brien,” said Murphy, “we’ll have an end to this dirt slinging. The people who do all the work will decide to share the dirt together like brothers and sisters. And we’ll have that garden I’ve been speaking to you about.”

“But what of the Blodgets and Schniffs and the no trespassing signs?”

“They shall retain for their very own, O’Brien, each and every clod of dirt which is marked plainly with their name and indorsed by the signature of the Lord God Almighty.”

“A most fertile idea, Murphy. Most fertile, indeed.”

ASININITY

Introducing Mr. Murphy's wife, Bridget, and Mr. O'Brien's wife, Mary.

"FOR HEAVEN SAKES, Mrs. Murphy. Are you writing a book?"

"Come in, Mary. How do you spell asininity?"

"I was never a good one for spelling, Bridget. But surely, you mean assassination don't you?"

"I mean asininity."

"Indeed, and is there such a word?"

"Never mind. I'll call them asses. That's what they are anyhow."

"Are you writing about the men, Bridget?"

"Not all of them. Just the Congressmen."

"And what is it, a book?"

"I am writing a letter to the president."

"The president of what?"

"The president of the United States."

"Good Lord, Bridget! I didn't know you knew him."

"I don't. Not as a person to speak to."

"Then why should you write him a letter?"

"To give him a piece of my mind, that's why, and to tell him we want no war."

"Surely he will pay no attention to the likes of you, Bridget."

"He will indeed, Mary, for it's folks like us that pay his salary."

"Do you think it will do any good, Bridget?"

"'Twill be helpful for him to know what we think. See here what I say: 'Mr. President Roosevelt of the United States; dear sir: Please excuse my handwriting. I have a big washing to do and the small boys are very careless with their shirts, and

with a touch of rheumatism in my knuckles, I do not write for the fun of it like some of these people.' "

"That's very good, Bridget."

" 'Tis just the beginning. Listen: 'You do not know who I am, and that is not surprising. But you may wonder why I am writing to you when you do not know me. There is a reason. My husband is always reading books, and I think he would make a good president too excepting he has to support his family and has so little time for politics.' "

"That is so true, Bridget. I know my man would have made a success of himself if he hadn't been so busy earning a living."

"To continue: 'As my husband said last night, the president is in bad company all the time with those bankers and Congressmen around the White House, and it does no harm to keep him reminded that we are not following him blindly. It is like Lincoln said, we will go with a man as long as he is going in our direction, but we will part with him when he turns down a side alley. My husband is a great admirer of Mr. Lincoln and is always quoting him. I think it is a terrible thing that they shot him and I am sure you feel the same way about it.' "

"My goodness, Bridget, I could never write like that."

" 'Tis inherited. When I was a girl they told me I should be a writer. But the children and the washing and all. To go on: 'We have read in the papers how you say you are trying to keep America out of the war, and I know it will be a great comfort to you to know we are not going to war. I will not permit my husband to do so, even if he should depart from his senses and try it and if anybody tries to take my boys I will beat their brains out with a broom handle. We have had great trouble raising them, especially with the depression, and although they may tell you the oldest boy is a devil, it is not true. He is a sweet boy with enough spirit for twins and they do not rightly

understand him. I have had enough trouble teaching him good manners without some General telling him he should kill people.' "

"You are very right, Bridget."

" 'So we are not going to war, and none of the people in our neighborhood are going to war. If the Congressmen want any such asin——no, I changed that—If the Congressmen want to make asses of themselves, we know they can do it all too well. But they are not going to make asses of us.' "

"Very true, Bridget."

"That's as far as I got when you came in. Will you have a nice cup of tea, Mary?"

JIMMY FEATHERS

JIMMY FEATHERS was the pantryman aboard ship. He had just enough flesh hanging on him to walk his bones around. Tall, lanky, hook-nosed, florid-complexioned and ill-natured, he first looked on me as a kind of giddy-brained criminal because I was young. His skin was very white, but his cheeks were red and under them, and even under his long nose, an amazing network of red and purple veins was evident.

When the passengers had finished dinner, he'd snort, "Come on boys, and get your chow," and would dish out what was left into our plates.

Thin silver spectacles balanced on his nose about two inches away from his eyes so that he looked through them like microscopes, and regarded us much as if we were germs.

They said he came from "a very fine family in England" and had a "very good education." But that was a long time ago.

In the old days of steamshipping he had been the best known chief steward on the finest ships running to Australia and the Orient. He had plenty of money in those days. Finally they discovered why. He was caught smuggling dope, and for a long time afterward was blacklisted and on the beach. Later he got back as pantryman, but by that time the booze had got him.

Somewhere ashore he had a wife and a family. But they hated him and had a legal arrangement whereby they took nearly all his wages, leaving him with only a few dollars which he spent entirely on bootleg whiskey.

Jimmy is dead now, but I was very fond of him. He hated me at first because I was enthusiastic about life, whereas he knew from irrefutable experience that life was lousy.

When I first came aboard ship he treated me with all the

contempt which young creatures merit. We young fellows used to look forward to new and unexplored ports with hilarious enthusiasm, whereas Jimmy Feathers knew all the ports were alike—saloons, whore houses, ugly cops, lonely streets, headaches and nickle pianos. So why shouldn't he treat us with contempt?

Later on though, we got friendly, and he decided I was a fairly decent kid. He regarded me as a piece of raw meat about to be ground up by the hamburger-grinder of life.

For all his boozing, Jimmy was an A-1 pantryman, and as I think back I realize it would have been better to leave him alone. He was sick of life and waiting to die, and it was too late for any thought of comeback.

But we got a new chief steward aboard—a really good guy—who had been a glory-hole janitor under Feathers back in the old days. He decided to bring Jimmy back. After one trip he made Jimmy 2nd cabin steward.

That may seem like nothing to you. But it meant a real boost in pay, and what's more, it meant Jimmy would wear an officer's uniform again. I don't know whether you've got the brains to realize what that meant to him.

He went ashore and dug into an old trunk somewhere and came back with a set of ancient uniforms he hadn't worn in 15 or 20 years. He looked like the ghost of a old paddle-wheel seaman walking around on a modern steamship. And he was nervous.

Some of the fellows laughed at him and nearly all said the chief steward was crazy trying to bring old Feathers back to his glory. But Jimmy was nervous.

I know, because he was my room mate, and we'd sailed together enough so that he knew he could trust me. To you it probably seems silly. To him, it meant a chance to step back into the old days—to be respected.

After he moved out of the glory-hole and into the two-man cabin he was to share with me, he told me all about it. He was so old he was almost dead, and I was so young I was lathering fuzz and shaving it off under the illusion it was a beard. But when he talked with me—and he had to talk with someone—I was the old man and he was the kid. He told me how he was going to make good on this, how he was going to lay off the booze, how he was going to show everybody.

When he put on one of those ancient uniforms, he posed for me and asked me, between the two of us, whether anybody would notice their oldness, because he couldn't afford new ones.

And that was at Christmas time, too. I had shore friends who would come aboard and kid around with me. Some of them brought me a bottle of gin and a cigar. Jimmy didn't have any friends. The only people he knew were his wife and family who hated him because he was a boozier and no good.

Knowing Jimmy, I hid the bottle of gin so he couldn't get at it. Then as I got dressed up to go ashore for Christmas Eve with my friends, he sat on the edge of the settee and watched me. I asked him what he was going to do, and he said "nothing."

So I gave him the bottle of gin and the cigar, and the kindly, sweet look that came into his irritable old eyes was almost beautiful.

It must have been four or five in the morning before I came rolling back on board full of a dozen varieties of bottledg and the immediate memory of a lot of fun. I opened the cabin door and there was old Jimmy lying on the deck. Beside him was the empty gin bottle. His face was purple. In the ash tray was the butt of the cigar, smoked to the last fragment.

I lifted his old bones up and put him in his bunk. You wouldn't believe how thin that man was. It was like lifting a deck chair.

On sailing day he was so drunk he couldn't do his work. The chief steward was disgusted. He put somebody in his place and broke Jimmy back to pantryman.

Sadly he gathered his gear from the two-man cabin and moved back to the stinking glory-hole.

I was sure sorry.

The chief steward after that would tell everybody: "What a hell of a dirty trick that guy played on me. I stuck my neck out giving him a chance. And what did the son-of-a-bitch do but go and get himself stinky-eyed on sailing day."

CHANTY

Said Admiral Land, I am frantic
With Seamen, West Coast and Atlantic;
I think it's outrageous
That men should want wages
For living a life so romantic.

THE FAMILY AND SOCIALISM

Will socialism destroy the family and morality?

If something isn't done to halt this war and end the depression, there won't be very many families left. As for morality, capitalists are not noted for it.

Here's what socialism would do for families:

In the first place, it would see that all husbands had jobs and could pay the rent.

In the second place, it would give every woman an opportunity to pursue a career if she so desired without sacrificing home and family life. If a woman didn't want to pursue a career, nobody would pursue her with one. It's up to her.

Day nurseries, community laundries and other aids would be established to enable women to have children without becoming prisoners in the home.

At the present time, most women have to choose between children or a career. They don't get an even chance at life with **men**.

Full maternity care would be provided by the state in order that no child would be conceived in worry.

Socialism also contends that a woman's bond to her husband, and vice versa, shall be genuine affection and companionship—*not economic dependency*.

Socialism contends that when a woman marries a man, or a man marries a woman, in order to get a meal ticket, that's immorality.

Men and women would have not only an equal right to work, but it would be the duty of society to provide jobs.

At the present time, the right to work is merely the right to look for a job. Under socialism, it is the right to have a job, and to have democratic voice in the conditions of work.

Under socialism, you don't get anything without working,

and if you don't work you don't eat. But there is plenty of work for all and plenty of opportunity for advancement, achievement and personal betterment.

Of course, if some men and women preferred that the husband be the provider and the woman devote herself to the home, they'd be free and welcome to do so.

The object of giving women full and equal rights in the world of work and achievement is to enable them to do what they want, not to force them to do anything they don't want to do.


Men and women are certainly not equal inasmuch as the woman must bear all the physical burdens of childbirth. Socialism therefore provides every aid and consideration to equalize these differences.

As far as brains and ability are concerned, men and women are equal, and the record proves it.

Under socialism the women do not shave their hair off and smoke cigars. They can if they want to, but they don't want to. They remain as feminine as ever, in fact more so, since they are not forced to become work horses in the home, and since sweat shop conditions are abolished in industries.

The facts of life remain the facts of life, excepting that people can afford them for a change.

Under socialism you can afford to get married and afford to raise a family.

 You can also be assured there will be jobs and opportunities for your children when they grow up, because there are no depressions under socialism.

Likewise you don't have to be humiliated with the idea of being a burden to your children in your old age. You'll get a full and adequate pension and be able to spend your last days in security and comfort.

Also, your children will be protected from your own foolish-

ness and incompetence, if you happen to be that kind. They would have equal rights and opportunities with all other kids. They would not be starved in slums or shamed at school because you happened to be a drunkard—if you are a drunkard. The state would see to that.

Finally, I'll remind you that the "National Socialism" of Germany and Italy, and the "National Socialism" that a lot of big shots and bankers are talking about for Britain and America, is *not socialism* or anything like it. It is fascism. It is a dirty and bigoted last stand of capitalism—an attempt to prevent socialism by force and regimentation—and war.

The socialism of the Soviet Union *is socialism*.

Just compare the Nazi super-race dogma with the Soviet principle of the brotherhood of all races.

UNCOMPROMISING

A Trotskyite once, it is said,
Heard that Communists advocate bread.
He took the position
Of firm opposition
And fasted until he was dead.

J. B. McNAMARA

We made no apology or explanation.
We took his poor dead body,
From which life was gone,
And from which no more agony
Or punishment could be squeezed—
Which could suffer no more,
Weep no more,
Or speak defiance.
We took his poor dead body,
Carried it away reverently
And buried it with love.

They called this man criminal and violent.
Those who have rocked the earth with violence
And sickened it with their own crimes,
Hastened to call this man violent.
They were eager, gloating, vindictive.
"He is violent," they leered,
And their expensive presses
Screamed and sang with hatred.

They took him young and calm,
With kindly eyes,
And buried him in concrete and steel;
Hid him from the sun and the sky,
And barred him from all warmth
And friendly contact.
They locked him in a grey world
Among criminals for thirty years.

But warm love
And the fire of devotion
Glowed in him—
Glowed within walls of stone,
Behind bars of iron;
And he walked their narrow concrete world
With head erect
And pride intact,
Through thirty tortured years.

The presses rolled with hatred
And spewed their blackening filth,
Tearing and smearing and gloating
For thirty, dirty,
Hate-delirious years.

His frail body sickened
Around a soul that smiled with strength.
It aged in cold confinement,
Wasted, weakened and died.
And his eyes gleamed with fighting love,
His lips spoke defiance,
His soul cried forth in courage
For the workers he loved,
While his body sickened and died.

The presses rolled in another wave
Of rancid, malignant hate,
Pouring infamy on his name,
Dirt on his soul,
And flinging it in the eyes,
Screaming it in the ears,
Of the men he loved.

But the workers made no apology
Or explanation.

They came in solemn dignity;
Asked for his poor dead body,
Immune to pain or hate—
Asked for the empty shell of him,
Held it in reverent hands—
Carried the poor dead body off
And buried it with love.

We weep, it is true,
And our heads are bowed in sadness
As the warm soil covers him over.
But these are not tears of weakness.
Our heads will lift
At the last mean shovel of earth,
And the dream that lived in J. B.'s head
And sang in his heart,
Shall have its birth.

Today we bury a man we loved—
A name we recognize and honor
Without apology or explanation
To the makers and masters of violence
Who understood him as well as we did.

What they say of
DANGEROUS THOUGHTS
and its author

RUTH McKENNEY: "... I've been toying with the idea that Mike Quin is a sort of combination Mark Twain and Voltaire, 1940 model, but that doesn't seem to really nail it down. Maybe Mark Twain plus a sound knowledge of economics; Voltaire added up with a human heart."

ANNA LOUISE STRONG: "Already people who keep their eyes open have marked Mike as one of the best labor writers in the country. . . . If America succeeds in keeping out of war we'll all owe a lot to Mike for it; his slogan, 'The Yanks Are Not Coming,' has done more than any one person has done to crystalize popular resistance. . . . Yeh, his thoughts are quite 'dangerous' . . . to the people's enemies. . . ."

CLIFFORD ODETS: "Quin has a rare talent for revealing complex truths in a few simple paragraphs. . . . Quin is a real man of the people. More than one writer I know will say of many of his pieces, 'I wish I had written that!'"

MILLEN BRAND: "I particularly like the fables or allegories. . . . Mike has a real feeling for dialogue, for the speech of the people. . . ."